

**THE VEILS
OF ISIS**

FRANK HARRIS



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THE VEILS OF ISIS

FRANK HARRIS

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THE VEILS OF ISIS

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

FRANK HARRIS

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"Unpath'd Waters," etc.

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The Veils of Isis

The Veils of Isis

TOWARD the end of the second dynasty a youth whom his father and mother had named Amanthes came to manhood near the village of Assouan on the Nile. From childhood on he had been self-willed and passionate beyond the ordinary, and growing in boldness and intelligence he took the lead of the other young men. Because of his superiority his father and mother, though poor cultivators, were persuaded to devote him to the priesthood. And as the young man was nothing loath they took him one day to the Temple of Osiris. The Chief Priest received them with kindness, for the youth's promise had been noised abroad and he spoke to them warmly in favor of the God whom he worshiped and His divine mission: he told them how Osiris had come down from Heaven to help men and had suffered Death for their sakes through the Powers of Darkness. With tears in his eyes he told of the resurrection of the God and how at the last He should judge the dead.

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Scarcely had he finished when Amanthes cried:

“Can a God be defeated? Why didn’t Osiris conquer the Darkness?” and other such things.

And when his father and mother, terrified by his boldness, tried to restrain him, for the Chief Priest held up his hands in deprecation, Amanthes went on stoutly:

“I can’t adore a God who accepts defeat; and I don’t fear judge or judgment. I want to worship Isis, the woman-goddess, the giver of life, for her creed of joy and hope and love must last as long as the earth lasts and the sun gives light.”

The Chief Priest pointed out that the temples to Osiris were larger and more important than any other, and the service of the God was nobler and more highly rewarded, but Amanthes would not be persuaded, insisting that the only divinity he could worship was Isis, to whose service he was willing to devote himself night and day with all his heart.

Impressed by his earnestness and enthusiasm, the Chief Priest at length decided that it might be as well if Amanthes went down the river to Memphis to the great Temple of Isis, and as the young man took fire at the suggestion he offered to give him letters to the High Priest which would insure his being accepted, and he excused himself afterward

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for this weakness by saying that he had never met so eloquent a youth or so sincere a calling. Amanthes, he said, seemed careless about everything else, but the moment the name of Isis was mentioned his eyes glowed, his face became intense, and it really looked as if the youth were inspired.

Ten days later Amanthes journeyed down the river to Memphis, and presented himself before the authorities of the Temple of Isis. But here his passion carried little persuasion, and at first it seemed as if his desire would be thwarted. The High Priest read the letter of his colleague and, after one glance at Amanthes, proposed to engage him as a servitor in the Temple, but thought it right, at the same time, to warn him that only the best and noblest were selected to wait on the Goddess herself, and that before one could hope to enter her immediate Presence one must have spent half a lifetime in the temple.

"It took me," he said, "nearly five years to learn the routine of the service."

Amanthes listened with wide eyes and bowed in silence to the High Priest's decision, but from the very day he entered the temple he set himself to learn all the ritual and ceremonial forms, and devoted himself with such passion to whatever was

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given to him to do that he became a marked man among the younger priests.

Though he held himself aloof from all his comrades, he was not much disliked by them, for whenever his father and mother sent him presents of dates or dainties he shared them out among the others, contenting himself always with the simple sustenance provided in the Temple.

To his father and mother he wrote but once, telling them to look upon him as dead, for he had given himself to the service of the Goddess with heart and life and for him there was no looking back.

A few months after his admission to the Temple, Amanthes took a chance opportunity and begged the High Priest to enroll him among the immediate servants of the Goddess.

"I know all the forms and ceremonies by heart," he said, "and am eager now to learn the will of the Goddess herself."

The High Priest was greatly astonished; but though he found by examining the young man that he was indeed a master of all the services, he would not grant his request.

"You have still much to learn," he said, "before you can hope for such honor, and the next test is difficult," and on that he took Amanthes to the

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library of the Temple and showed him a room filled with great rolls of papyrus, and priests studying them.

"They are all at work," he explained, "interpreting the divine Oracles."

"But where are the Sayings of the Goddess?" cried Amanthes, as if nothing else mattered.

"Here," said the High Priest, turning over one small yellow roll, "are the sacred words of the Divine One, the words which have been commented upon by wise men for thousands of years, and before we can believe that anyone is worthy to enter the shrine of the Goddess he must first show his fitness by interpreting her Oracles, or correcting some of the commentators who have gone before."

"Let me first see the Goddess and learn her will," argued the young man; "when I know her I shall be able to interpret her words."

"Presumption!" cried the High Priest, "mortals can only get glimpses of the Divine, and can never know the divine Will completely, any more than they can see the Goddess unveiled."

All the young man's pleading was met with a steady refusal: it was unheard of that any priest should be admitted to the Shrine of the Deity before he had passed at least ten years in the Temple.

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“I myself,” said the High Priest at length, “knew all the Oracles and had written two great books upon them before I was admitted in my twelfth year of service, and even then I only served at the door, and never entered the Shrine but with eyes bound so that I might not look upon the naked beauty of the Goddess.”

Amanthes pleaded with him as one pleads for life; but still the High Priest remained obdurate.

“There are the Oracles,” he said, pointing to the books; “distinguish yourself and I will shorten the time of your probation as much as I dare, or as custom will allow.”

Amanthes once more bowed his head and took his place among the students.

In the seventh month of the same year Amanthes interpreted a saying of the Goddess with such freedom that all the readers cried blasphemy against him, and brought him before the High Priest to answer for the crime. Amanthes defended himself with much boldness and many good reasons, till the High Priest cried:

“You read the Oracles as if the Goddess were a woman and nothing more, and that is wrong.”

“How else can they be read?” retorted Amanthes. “If she is not a woman one can never understand

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her, and if she is more than a woman we men can only get to the divine through the human.”

The High Priest himself was shaken, and hesitated to decide, for in the course of the argument he had found that the young man had read the sacred Roll from beginning to end, and knew every word of the Goddess by heart.

“How did you learn it,” he couldn’t help asking, “in so short a time?”

Amanthes only looked at him smiling, by way of answer, and again begged the Chief Priest to admit him now to the service of the Goddess, for he had surely proved himself and been patient. There was nothing to gain by waiting.

But immemorial custom was against him and the High Priest resented his insistence.

“You are too daring,” he said at length; “it may be well to use boldness to a woman, but to a Goddess you must show reverence.”

“No, no,” cried Amanthes, “reverence to the woman, who doesn’t expect it and will be won by it, boldness to the Goddess.”

“Blasphemy,” cried the High Priest; “you are on a dangerous way and I must not encourage you,” and motioning to the great bronze door, behind them, he added: “Go on diligently as you have be-

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gun and it will be open to you perhaps after five years."

"Five years!" repeated Amanthes sadly; "five years of life and youth lost: five years!"

"That door has never opened in less," replied the High Priest solemnly, but as he spoke Amanthes gripped his arm, crying:

"Look, look!" and when the High Priest turned he found the door of the Shrine standing open.

"Strange," said the old man; "it must be some accident; I will shut it," and he seized the handle, but the door would not be moved; and as he stood there all shaken and hesitating, Amanthes with eyes aflame cried out:

"See, Isis the Beloved, Isis herself has answered my prayer."

And Amanthes moved as if to enter the sacred place, but the High Priest held him back, warning:

"If you enter without reverence and bound eyes you will die on the threshold."

Amanthes laughed aloud, and strode past him into the Shrine, and as the High Priest held up his hands in fear and horror, the bronze door drew to of itself and closed between them.

From this time on Amanthes was constantly in the Shrine of the Goddess. Indeed, he scarcely gave

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himself time to eat or sleep, and everyone remarked how thin he grew and haggard with the constant service. And when, after some months, the High Priest warned him that his health would break down, and told him that he must not forget that the chief thing was the interpretation of the Oracles, Amanthes answered impatiently:

“I know nothing yet: the Goddess vouchsafes no answer to my entreaties! How can one interpret without knowledge?”

Now there was a tradition that in the first dynasty a young priest had been consumed in the service of Isis, and had wasted away before the Goddess, till one day he was translated into flame and disappeared in a moment, and it crossed the High Priest's mind that Amanthes was on the same road, and likely to meet the same fate, and he desisted from admonishing him, fearing to make bad worse. He left the young man to his own devices, till strange tales came to him from the other priests that set all the Temple whispering.

It was put about that at night Amanthes used to speak to the Goddess as if she were a woman, and touch her statue as if the limbs were flesh. He had been overheard entreating her as a lover entreats his mistress, telling over her beauties adoringly, and

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begging her to lift the veil that prevented him enjoying her divine loveliness. While all the priests were muttering, and wondering how the impious boldness would be punished, one came to them with ashen face and a stranger tale.

“The Goddess has answered Amanthes,” he gasped; “Isis asked him why he wanted the veil lifted, and he stretched forth his arms and cried: ‘For Love’s sake,’ and as he spoke the Goddess trembled, and I fled, for indeed the sacred veil had begun to fall away——”

The priests wouldn’t credit the tidings. But when Amanthes came forth from the Shrine some believed, for he was as one transfigured. He spoke to no man, but went straight to his cell, and from this time on he was continually heard praising the Goddess in song and glorifying her Service.

A little later Amanthes went to the High Priest and asked him to be allowed to write an interpretation of the Oracles, and his interpretation was so bold at once and simple that the High Priest was amazed by it and frightened, and asked him how he dared to treat the divine words so boldly, and the young man answered quietly now and in all humility:

“Love is my only guide, and the boldness of love is reverence.”

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The High Priest bowed his head, for in spite of himself he was moved by the young man's tone and unaccustomed humbleness. And when the servitors came to the High Priest and demanded that Amanthes should be punished for insolent boldness he shook his head and rebuked them impatiently. And when they persisted, declaring that the worship of Amanthes for the Goddess was an outrage and insult to her, he answered simply:

"The Goddess can protect herself."

It was evident to all that he did not believe the slanders. And indeed such portions of the interpretations of Amanthes as the High Priest thought fit to publish were so astonishingly simple and convincing that they won many to admiration, and his fame was noised abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, and people came from afar to hear his words and to listen to his interpretation of the divine speech.

And his humility now was as evident as his boldness had been aforetime.

"I know nothing," he said: "I am but a reed through which the Goddess speaks: of myself nothing."

His modesty impressed the people more than any assurance would have done, and when he served Isis

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in public the great Temple was thronged and all the people stirred by the fervor of the ritual, and when at the end he knelt before the Goddess, to recite the formal benediction, he prayed with such passion that everyone was affected, and the worship of the Goddess, the Giver of Life, spread on all sides and grew mightily.

The success of Amanthes made many of the priests envious, and sharpened the jealousy of those who had been against him from the beginning. And of these one of the chief was that servitor who had already spied upon him, and reported his entreaties of the Goddess to the High Priest. This man had been one of the most learned of the commentators before Amanthes had appeared. He did not know all the words of the Goddess like Amanthes, but he knew by heart all the comments that had been made on them and all the interpretations for a thousand years, which were indeed in themselves a library of dead men's words. He had been supplanted by the coming of Amanthes, and now lived for nothing but his undoing. One day he came to the High Priest with a mysterious air and a slander which he would not tell, and when the High Priest pressed him to say what it was, he withstood him.

"I will not repeat what I have heard," he said,

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“nor soil my lips with the blasphemy. Come and hear for yourself.”

And when the High Priest refused to come, for he was very old and fearful of shocks, the slanderer insisted:

“You will see Amanthes,” he said, “at his foul work; and you will see Her too, and you shall judge whether such things are to be permitted.”

He spoke with such horror and hinted at such practices that the High Priest at length consented to go to his cell with him and spy upon Amanthes; for his cell joined the Shrine itself, and was only separated from it by one wall. And he showed the High Priest that, when his cell was darkened, they could see between two layers of the stone everything that went on in the Shrine of the Goddess and hear every word as distinctly as if they had been within the sacred place.

And while the High Priest and servitor were listening, Amanthes entered the Shrine and stood before the Goddess. And they saw that he had come as from the bath, for his neck shone and his linen had been bleached by the Nile water. For some time he stood in dumb entreaty with hands outstretched, and the High Priest thought that the Goddess trembled before the dumb intensity of the

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appeal, and he turned his head aside for he would not trust his eyes.

At length Amanthes spoke, and the High Priest scarcely recognized his voice:

“How long?” he cried. “How long?”

And his arms fell as if in despair, and he sighed heavily as one in pain. And suddenly he went over to the Goddess, and put his hands upon her hips, and the Chief Priest turned aside breathless, for he would not look, though the servitor with sharp-set eyes nudged him. But he heard Amanthes speaking, and as he spoke he turned again to the Shrine, and this was what he heard:

“How long am I to wait, O Queen; how long? Before I knew you I worshiped you, and every favor you have accorded me has fed my passion. When you removed the first veil you showed me a new Isis, even lovelier than my imagining, and I stood entranced; and every veil you have taken off since has revealed some new perfection hitherto undreamed. Am I then unworthy to have the last veil lifted? Unworthy, though consumed with adoration.”

And as his hands touched the Goddess, the High Priest saw that she trembled as if she had been flesh

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and blood, and his breath caught, for the Goddess spoke.

“If I refuse,” said Isis, “it is for your sake, Amanthes,” and her hand touched his hair.

And Amanthes cried aloud:

“To refuse one thing is to refuse all: love knows no denials: I would see you as you are, as the Gods see you face to face.”

And the High Priest shuddered in fear, for the grave voice of the Goddess was heard again:

“No woman’s soul can resist love: to-morrow it shall be as you desire.”

And they saw Amanthes twine his arms round the Goddess and kiss her limbs, and with the last look the High Priest saw that he was prone before the Shrine with his lips pressed against the feet of Isis.

And the High Priest as he went would not even speak with the servitor, for he was full of apprehension, and torn in many ways, partly by affection for Amanthes, partly by curiosity, and most of all for fear of what would happen on the morrow.

In the morning he gave orders that the servitor should be in close attendance upon himself, and that his cell, from which one could look into the Shrine, should be closed, and he ordained twenty-four hours

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of solemn fasting and prayer for all the priests, and decreed that the Temple should be shut.

In the second hour, after the orders had been given, Amanthes came to him, and the High Priest hardly dared to look on him, for his face was as the face of one who had talked to the Divine and won his soul's desire.

But Amanthes stretched out his strong hands and caught the old man by the shoulders, and said in his rich voice: "I thank you. You have done what I would have ordered in your place."

And the High Priest gasped:

"Are you not afraid?"

"Afraid?" he cried. "To-night is the night for which I was born," and as he turned and went the High Priest saw his shining eyes and felt a little envious.

The morning after the great fast the High Priest went himself to the Shrine with all his attendants robed and in order as to solemn service. And after the three prayers the bronze doors were opened; and there, stretched before the Goddess, lying prone, was Amanthes. And the moment the High Priest saw him he knew that the youth was dead, and when he looked up at the Goddess he saw she was veiled as usual, and her hands were by her side.

The Yellow Ticket: Jiolte Bilet

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THE scene is in Moscow, just where the wide Boulevard meets the Tverskaia. In the middle of the way is the statue to Puschkin; on the right hand, walling the street, the great monastery to the Passion of Christ. This is the favorite promenade of the gay-plumaged night-birds of Moscow. They walk up and down the street in the glare of the shops, and then cross and go down the Boulevard, shadows drifting from darkness into the light, and again from the light into darkness.

One night in the early winter of 1912 a young girl was among them, warmly but dowdily dressed, like a well-to-do provincial; yet she scanned the passers-by as the professionals scan them, and walked slowly as they walk, though it was no time for loitering. The winter had set in early, and already in November the air was keen with frost, and the stars glittered like diamonds.

A young man came hurrying by: as he passed he caught sight of the girl's profile and eyes as she lin-

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gered before a shop window. He stopped at once and went over to her.

“Are you waiting for anyone?” he asked.

The girl replied quite quietly:

“No one in particular.”

“Will I do?” he asked gaily.

She threw a quick glance at him and nodded.

His manner changed with her acceptance. For a moment he put out his hand as if to take her by the arm, and then drew back.

“I’m so sorry, but I have to dine to-night with some relatives; I’m late already,” he hurried on, “but I must know you; I never saw anyone so pretty. I can’t stay to-night; I must go now; I can’t get out of it. You’ll meet me to-morrow night, won’t you?”

The girl shook her head.

“But why not?” he exclaimed. “It’s absurd. I want you; you have taken my fancy, and I want to know all about you. Do promise me you will go home now and be here to-morrow at the same time.”

The girl shook her head again: “I can’t promise.”

“But why not?” he insisted. “It’s absurd. Suppose I pay you for the evening?”

He threw open his fur coat and took some notes out of his waistcoat pocket.

The Yellow Ticket: Jiolte Bilet

"No, no!" cried the girl, shrinking away; "I don't want money."

"Don't want money?" he said. "Don't be silly. What else are you here for? Now look," he went on imperiously, "here are ten roubles. Now go home, and I'll meet you here to-morrow night at half-past seven exactly. Will you promise?"

She shook her head; but he seized her hand and shut the note in the palm.

"I must go," he cried hurriedly; "but I'm sure you'll be here to-morrow; you're too young to cheat." And he hurried away.

The girl didn't turn to look after him, but stood for a moment undecided, then took out a little purse and pushed in the banknote and resumed her casual walk, now glancing at the passers-by, now with apparent coquetry stopping in the full glare of some shop window, loitering.

A little while later another man accosted her.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

She looked up as the strong voice reached her.

"Nothing."

"And your name?" he went on, drawing her nearer still to the glaring light in the window.

"Rebecca," she said, looking up at him.

"A Jewess!" he cried. "I might have known it

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with that coloring and those great eyes. But you don't look Jewish, you know, with that little straight nose; and you are new at this game, aren't you?"

The girl's eyes met his for a moment.

"Yes," she replied.

"Will you come and dine?" he asked.

The girl nodded.

"Are you free for the night?"

She paused as if swallowing something before she nodded.

"Come on, then," he said; "we'll go and have some dinner and a talk."

The next moment he had stopped a droschky that was swinging by behind a black Orloff, and had helped the girl to a seat.

"To the Hermitage," he said, and the little car whirled away down the street.

The Hermitage in Moscow is a very convenient establishment. It has over two hundred suites of rooms, from five roubles for the night to fifty; from one room with a bed in it and the ordinary exiguous toilet requirements, to a suite of sitting-room, bedroom, and a bathroom so large that a couple may swim about in it. It has sixteen entrances, too, and as many exits, so there is small chance of meeting anyone you don't want to meet.

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The man, evidently a well-to-do merchant, selected a good number, and as they followed the waiter into the corridor a little bell tinkled, and continued to tinkle till they got into the sitting-room and the closed door shut out its ringing.

“What’s that bell for?” asked the girl.

“Oh, that is one of the customs of the place,” said the man, taking off his gloves and laughing to the waiter; “isn’t it, Ivan? The bell rings just to warn people not to leave their rooms till the new comers are installed, otherwise one might meet inconvenient people in the passages. Everything is well arranged in the Hermitage, that one can say for it.”

The girl nodded her head, smiling, and stood expectant in the middle of the room. Hurriedly, but as one accustomed to it, the man ordered a good dinner, and as the waiter left the room he turned with astonishment to the Jewess:

“What!” he cried, “you haven’t taken off your hat and coat yet?” and he came toward her as if to help her.

At once she hurried over to the nearest glass, put up her hands, and took off her little fur cap and began arranging her hair; then slowly loosening her coat, she folded the heavy garment carefully, and laid it on a chair.

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The man went on talking the while:

"Lucky it was I met you; didn't know what to do with my evening. A man I expected to see failed me and I was at a loose end, when I caught sight of your pretty face. But what age are you, Rebecca? You look very young," he added, as if remarking her extreme youth for the first time.

"Sixteen," she said.

"Really!" he cried. "I should have thought nineteen; but then you mature more quickly than Russians, don't you?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders. "I suppose so."

They were interrupted by the waiter who brought in dinner, and for the first course or two little was said. As usual, they had the meat first and then the fish, Russian fashion. When they had finished the fish, the man's appetite being half sated, he found time to notice that the girl had hardly touched the food.

"Come, come," he cried, "you must eat."

"I can't," she said; "I don't feel hungry."

"That is no reason: you must eat," he insisted. "We live by eating; and you must drink too," and he poured her out another glass of sweet champagne. "You like champagne, don't you?" he asked.

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"It tastes funny," she said. "At first it went up in my nose and tickled. I never saw it before."

"Really!" he exclaimed, "then you must be new at the game. How long have you been in Moscow?"

The girl seemed to hesitate: looked at him and looked down.

"You needn't tell me if you don't want to," he said huffily.

The waiter interrupted them again.

In a few minutes more the meal was finished. The man lit a cigarette. The waiter left the room for the last time, the pair were alone.

"Come, Rebecca," said the man. "Come and give me a kiss."

The girl came round the table and stood beside him. He put his arm round her and drew her down to his knee. She seemed awkward, hesitant.

"Where is the kiss?" he asked, smiling.

The girl turned to him, and kissed his cheek.

"Good God!" he cried, "you don't call that a kiss, do you? What is the matter with you?" and he put his cigarette-holder down on the table, and, winding both arms round her, drew her to him and held his lips to hers.

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She yielded stiffly, reluctantly. After kissing her for some little time the man pushed her away.

"Do you call that kissing? Why, you can't kiss at all. What's the matter with you? Give me a proper kiss."

Again the girl pecked at his cheek.

"Look here," he said, "if I displease you, tell me; but don't go on like this; it's silly."

He rose, looking at her crossly, his vanity smarting.

The girl noticed for the first time when he drew himself up that he was fine looking, above middle height, and powerful: a man in the prime of life, thirty perhaps, with strong face, clean-shaven but for the small fair mustache.

"You dislike me?" he went on, putting his hands on her shoulders, "tell me the truth?"

"No," she shook her head.

"Then why don't you kiss me?"

"I have kissed you."

"But you know that isn't the proper way to kiss," he said.

"Are there many ways of kissing?" she asked, looking up at him.

"Of course," he said. "This is the right way," and, taking her head in his hands, he crushed his lips

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on hers. "Now give me a good kiss, as if you liked me."

With glowing face, the girl gave him another peck.

"What do you mean?" he said, sitting down. "Come, tell me. I must know. Is it pretense with you, or dislike?"

The girl shook her head.

Suddenly her troubled, hot face gave him a new idea: "You're not a novice, are you? How long have you been in Moscow? Where do you live? Come, tell me." And he drew her to his knee again.

As the girl sat down she put her right elbow on the table behind her to keep herself upright and, as luck would have it, snapped the amber and meerschauam cigarette-holder. As she started up the man picked up the cigarette-holder, smiling.

"I don't mind," he said, "it doesn't matter. I will put the cigarette further away on a plate."

"I am so sorry," cried the girl.

"It's nothing," said the man. "But tell me when did you come to Moscow?"

The girl stood before him with her hands clasped in front of her, for all the world like a schoolgirl; indeed, she was hardly more. She had evidently made up her mind to speak.

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"This afternoon," she replied.

"What! for the first time?" he asked.

"For the first time," she repeated.

"Where do you live?"

"Here," she said.

"Here?" he repeated; "what do you mean?"

"It's a long story," she said, unclasping her hands and quickly clasping them again.

"Tell me it," he said. "We have time, and I should like to hear it all," and he drew her toward him.

And standing there by his left knee she told him the story.

"I came from Gorod by train. It is a long story."

Encouraged by his "Go on," she began again.

"I wanted to study at the University. Only three Jewesses are allowed to come from Gorod to Moscow. The three who won had been studying for years and years; the youngest of them was over thirty. Only three are allowed each year to leave the town, and there are thousands of Jewesses in Gorod. I was fourth, so I would have had to wait another year or perhaps longer. But as my mother was a widow I soon coaxed her, and she gave me the money and let me come to Moscow to study."

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“Why do you want to study?” he asked; “what’s the good of books? They only tire pretty eyes.”

The girl stared at him in wonder; the question was so unexpected, she had to think to find an answer; she began confusedly, eagerly:

“I want to know heaps of things, I’m so ignorant,” she burst out. “I want to be like the great women who have done things in the world. Oh, I can’t say what I want to say; but I—you know, to be ignorant to-day is stupid, oh, I——”

He nodded, hardly interested, wishing to get the story.

“And so you came to Moscow?”

“This afternoon,” she said; “it was already getting dark. I went to a hotel, but at the hotel—I had taken a room and everything—before they sent for my box to the station they asked me for my passport, and when I told them I hadn’t a passport they changed their manner at once, said they had no room for me, I had better go. . . .

“I went to a cheaper hotel and showed them that I had money; but again, as soon as they found I had no passport, they turned me out into the streets. . . . I did not know what to do. I spoke to a lady, and she answered rudely, treated me as if I were a beggar. So at last I spoke to one of those women

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who walk up and down the street. She was kind to me; she told me I could not get a lodging anywhere in Moscow without a passport; it was not possible. But even when she found out I was a Jewess she was kind, told me I was in a bad way, for I should not be able to get a passport, because the police don't like Jewesses. The only thing for me to do, she said, was to get a Yellow Ticket of the—you know—the Yellow Ticket of the prostitute!"

The man whistled—"Whew!"—a long, low note.

"She said, as it was early, she would go with me to the police bureau, and on the way she told me that it was quite easy to get a Yellow Ticket. I had only to go in boldly and ask for one and pay fifteen roubles, and come away. If I had money and wanted to study, I did not need to—do anything, but with the Yellow Ticket there were hundreds of houses where I could get a lodging; otherwise they'd let me freeze on the street. . . ."

The girl paused and looked at him.

"A prostitute is welcome, but not a Jewess, in Moscow—Christian Moscow," she added as if to herself.

The man laughed and put his arms round her.

The Yellow Ticket: Jiolte Bilet

"You are delightful," he said, laughing again. "Well, what happened then?"

"I went into the station," the girl went on, "and asked one of the policemen where I was to get a 'Yellow Ticket.' And he tried to kiss me and then took me into the Inspector's room, and the Inspector came and began questioning me. When I told him I had just come to Moscow he tried to kiss me, and I wouldn't let him, so he said he wouldn't give me a Yellow Ticket unless I let him kiss me; well, I let him; but then he wanted . . .

"At last I ran out of the place without the Ticket, and found that my friend had gone away. After a little while I found another woman, again a woman of the streets, and told her what had happened. She told me the only thing she could think of was for me to get a man and go home with him, and then get him to come with me in the morning to the police bureau, and a Yellow Ticket would be given to me at once.

"The Yellow Ticket," she explained gravely, "is a sort of prize in Moscow!"

"I dare say we can manage the Yellow Ticket," said the man carelessly. "But are you really a novice?"

The girl nodded.

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"You would rather not begin the game?"

She nodded quickly, eagerly.

"What an adventure!" he cried, stretching out his arms. "Do you know, it is rather lucky you have fallen into good hands, Rebecca? You interest me. Strangely enough, I don't want to kiss anyone particularly who doesn't want to kiss me. That is strange, isn't it?" he asked, laughing.

"No," she said, "it seems to me quite natural."

"That is because you are a girl," he replied, smiling. "It isn't natural to most men. Come, now, do you want to go in there and sleep alone? What would you like me to do? Let you sleep alone and then help you to get the Yellow Ticket in the morning, or go in there with you and have a good time?" and he nodded to the bedroom.

"Alone," she cried. "Do you mind? But then, where are you to sleep?" she added ruefully.

"Oh, I can sleep there," he said, pointing to the sofa; "I have often slept in worse places. I will read some papers I have got in my overcoat, and you can go in and go to bed." He spoke as if dismissing her, and the girl went hesitatingly toward the bedroom door. At the door she turned and looked at him. He nodded, smiling, and waved his hand to her.

The Yellow Ticket: Jiolte Bilet

"That's all right," he said; "have a good sleep."

"I'd like," she said, coming back a little way toward him, "I'd like to kiss you."

"Come along," he said, and she came back to him slowly across the room, and this time she yielded herself to him and left her lips on his. He lifted her away at last, and said:

"Now?" half interrogatively.

The girl cried quickly:

"Good night; thank you so much; good night," and, running across the room, disappeared into the bedroom and closed the door.

For a moment or two the man looked at the door, smiling; then he got up and went to his overcoat, took out some papers, lit another cigarette, and settled down to read in the armchair.

An hour later there was unbroken silence in the room. The man got up, stretched himself, took off his collar and coat, undid his boots, arranged his big fur overcoat as covering, then went to the door of the bedroom and listened: all was still. He put his hand on the handle: he could hear his heart throb.

After a pause he turned away and threw himself down on the sofa. In ten minutes he was asleep.

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Shortly before eight o'clock the man woke, got up and opened the windows, rang the bell and ordered breakfast, went into the bathroom and bathed his face and hands. While the waiter was laying the table, he went out hurriedly. In an hour he returned and went over and knocked at the girl's door. A moment later he heard her voice, and went in. She was standing fully dressed before him.

"Slept well?" he asked.

"Thanks to you!" she nodded, and the deep eyes dwelt on him.

"Been up long?" he asked.

"Two hours," she replied.

"Oh, you early bird! Now come and have breakfast. I have news for you."

"I have news for you too," she said, following him to the table. "This is a funny place."

"Why do you call it funny?" he said, taking up some salt fish on his fork.

"Because I came in while you were sleeping," she said, "and tried to go out. I wanted to buy you a cigarette-holder for the one I broke, but when I got to the entrance I was stopped. They told me I couldn't go out without you. It appears I might have robbed you, or murdered you, so I was es-

The Yellow Ticket: Jiolte Bilet

corted back here and told to wait. It is a funny place, the Hermitage."

"Do you know, you are a dear," he said, "to have thought of that holder," and he stretched out his hand to her. She came now willingly and stooped her dark head to his fair one and kissed him.

"That's better!" he cried. "You are making great progress. Fancy! You have learned to kiss quite nicely in twenty-four hours; that is very quick."

"Very easy," she said saucily, "when the heart teaches the lips."

"So you do like me a little?" he asked.

Again the eyes dwelt on him.

"Yes," she replied simply.

As if trying to shake off an unwonted emotion, he got up and said in his ordinary quick tone:

"I have been out trying to do something for you," and he took out his pocketbook and laid it on the table.

She noticed that his nails were more carefully kept than her own; she liked the evidence of care.

"You interested me last night," he said, "and I wanted really to do something for you, and persuade you to like me, I don't know why."

"That was good of you," she said, coming over

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and standing beside him; "but I do like you," she added softly.

"I thought perhaps you might," he said, putting his arm round her, "but, curiously enough, I wanted you to be free, quite free; so I went out and got you baptized, you little Jewess," and he turned up the pretty, glowing face with his hand and kissed her on the lips.

He went on speaking with mock gravity:

"Your name now is Vera Novikoff, and not Rebecca Rubinovitch."

"Vera Novikoff?" the girl marveled.

"Yes," he said, taking a paper out of his pocket-book. "Everything can be bought in Moscow, and I went out to buy a passport for you, and I bought a passport this morning in the name of Vera Novikoff, and as Vera Novikoff you can live in Moscow wherever you please, how you please, unmolested."

"How good of you!" she cried. "I knew you were good. But it must have cost you a lot of money?"

"No," he said, smiling into her eyes. "No, strange to say, Vera, it was cheaper than the Yellow Ticket. You said the Yellow Ticket was fifteen roubles; I paid twelve for this. It is cheaper, you see," and he held it toward her.

The Yellow Ticket: Jiolte Bilet

The girl took it in her hands, and said, simply, slowly, as if to herself:

“Cheaper! Yes, it costs less than the Yellow Ticket. . . .”

The Ugly Duckling

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AFTER HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

MY earliest memories are neither very clear nor very interesting; but when still very young I became conscious that I was unlike my brothers and sisters: I grew faster than they did and as soon as I out-topped them the tolerance they had hitherto shown me ceased; instead of kindness I got nothing but blame: whatever I did they found fault with: I was always getting in their way it seemed and always being snapped at by a brother or sister with reason and without. At first I didn't mind this much: with the unconsciousness of youth I took it all as part of the unexpectedness of life and paid no particular attention to it, giving as good as I got. But day by day the differences between my brothers and sisters and myself grew more marked, and I soon began to notice that they were getting our mother on their side and putting her against me, which made me miserable.

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In my wretchedness I would wander away from the others, for I hated to show how they had hurt me, and took to swimming about in the lake. I was attracted by the smell of a plant which only grew in rather deep water, and when I tasted it as young things do, I found it scented and sweet and infinitely more to my liking than the scraps of meat which the others were always hunting for along the shore of the lake or at the back-doors of the apefolk. And this taste of mine seemed to annoy my mother almost as much as it did my brothers and sisters, who all declared that the plant I liked was bitter and bad and made them as sick as I am sure the scraps of meat did me. At first, I couldn't for the life of me see why I shouldn't eat what I liked so long as I accorded the others the same freedom; but my mother told me it was wrong to be peculiar; it was good to be like the others and bad to be different from them, which seemed to me, I don't know why, senseless and unreasonable. But one day I was shown the matter from her point of view.

My lonely wanderings had made me fond of going into deep water, and I was soon a far stronger swimmer than any of my brethren: one day I ventured to swim out to the reed-fringed island in the center of the lake, and coast about it. There I

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found food of all sorts in profusion and of the very best, and nothing would content me but I must return at once and tell the others of my discovery. As luck would have it our mother had gone up the yard with the big drake, and I soon persuaded the ducklings to follow me to the island. It was a good way out and when we left the shelter of the shore, the waves ran higher, and soon one of the little ducklings was in trouble: seeing that, I helped her and in a little while the whole brood came safely to shore. But perhaps because they were tired and a little afraid they didn't like the food I showed them, and soon all wanted to get home again. I was disgusted with them but too proud to beg them to stay and give the new place a fair trial, so I stepped at once into the water and began to swim back.

On the way home one duckling after another was buffeted by the waves and got giddy, and in spite of all my efforts, if our mother had not espied us and come to my assistance, one or more of the brood must have been drowned. As soon as we all reached the shore our mother turned on me and upbraided me bitterly; I was not only ugly and overgrown, but wicked as well: she didn't know how I could be a child of hers: I was all neck and

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legs, not like a nice round duckling at all; dirty green, too, in color and not fluffy and soft like my pretty brothers and sisters. They were right to call me "The Ugly Duckling"; my conceit was intolerable, and if she ever again caught me breaking bounds and leading her little dears into danger, she'd teach me it was dangerous to break her commands.

All this time she went on smoothing and petting the little ones who seemed most knocked about; but I could see that the little beasts pretended to be more exhausted than they really were, just to get her sympathy, and perhaps be favored later with a dainty tid-bit or two which she might discover. And this set me against them almost as much as the delight they plainly showed on hearing me scolded.

After that adventure they always called me names, "Long-Neck" or "Black Shanks" or "Ugly Duckling" or something, and I took to living more and more by myself.

It became my chief pleasure to swim right out in the pond amid the high waves, and soon I got to know every nook and corner of the pond as well as the oldest drake.

When I came back after any of these expeditions

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I was always blamed by my mother who held me up now as an example of all that was wild and wicked to my brothers and sisters.

“You think you’re very clever,” she used to say, “but one of these days you’ll be properly punished for your impudence. I’m sure I don’t know how you came to be a child of mine. I’m ashamed of you. You’re not like a nice obedient little duck at all.”

This made me very wretched, and I told her I thought she was unkind, but she insisted that what my brothers and sisters did was right, and it was naughty of me not to be like them.

One day, however, they were all glad I was not like them. We were out at the edge of the pond, and I was sunning myself on the sand when a rough red terrier came rushing down at us. All my brothers and sisters ran together quacking and crying in huge dismay. And though our mother went in front of them, it was perfectly plain that she, too, was frightened; in fact, she quacked them all into the water as soon as she could. But I didn’t see why we should all run from one little animal with four legs, and so I puffed out my wings to get them ready to strike and to shield my neck and went toward the dog. As soon as he saw that

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there was someone not afraid of him, he stopped in astonishment and began to bark. I could not help hissing myself a little in defiance and to keep up my courage.

“Come on,” I said.

But he jumped round me barking, and it was quite easy for me to turn and face him all the time. In a minute or two he got tired, and then became a little ashamed of himself, so he pretended to see something interesting in the distance and scampered off. When I turned to the rest they were all in the water, and I thought they would at least thank me, for by facing the dog I had given them the time to get into safety. They all knew that if it hadn't been for me some of them might have been killed. I was a little proud of myself, and so was the less prepared for the return they made me. As I came toward them after a last look at the terrier, my brother Bill called out:

“Look at ‘Long Neck’ strutting about and showing off.”

And sister Jane cried: “No wonder the dog ran away, he's so ugly,” and they all laughed at the insult.

“Cowards needn't talk about being ugly,” I replied.

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But my mother snapped me up:

“You shouldn’t speak so,” she said, “and you shouldn’t be so proud; it is nothing to be proud of, a long neck.”

The contempt hurt me so much that tears came into my eyes, so I just walked into the water and swam away out by myself. The moment I passed the usual limit of the shallow water, my brethren all quacked loudly and made mother watch me, and she called me to come back, but my heart was too full; I cruised about by myself.

A little while later she called us all to dinner, but I didn’t come: I knew they were going to hunt about for worms and pieces of meat and refuse in the farmyard, and all that stuff used to make me sick, so I said I wasn’t hungry. But my mother cried back that I was to come in any case, that I soon would be hungry. I replied that then I would eat some the reeds or the plants that grew around the island in the middle of the pond, and this was a signal for a new outburst.

“He thinks he’s very fine,” quacked Bill. “He is a vegetarian and won’t eat a nice tasty bit of meat: he wants to be different from everybody.”

For answer I began swimming out to the island and let them jeer. From that day on I took

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to going about entirely by myself, and when I was lonely I just swallowed the tears and lived with my dreams.

One day I watched a hawk flying over the wood. I thought it must be fine to fly so high, and I began to exercise my wings and soon took delight in flying all round the island and circling higher and higher above the tops of the trees of the great wood.

One day my brothers saw me coming down and of course told my mother, and she took me seriously to task:

“You’ll fall and kill yourself one day,” she said. “It is no proper ambition for a duck; you don’t want to make yourself hard and leathery; you ought to be plump and soft and juicy.”

I said I hated to fill myself like the rest till I couldn’t waddle, but at this they all set upon me and began to peck at me. Involuntarily I lifted my wings, and struck, not hard, but just to keep them off. As luck would have it I hit Bill, and he gave one loud squawk and turned over on his back as if he were dead. My mother went and fondled him and called him every endearing name she could lay her tongue to, and said I was a great brute to use my strength like that, and she would

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have nothing more to do with me; I was a beast for injuring my brother, for only a beast would do such a thing; and she hoped she would never see me again.

I had gone into the water after the quarrel, but this hurt me so much that I simply sprang from the water and in half a dozen strokes of my wings, was out of hearing.

From that day on, I only saw them in the distance. My life was very lonely: I had no one to play with, no one to talk to, no one to tell what I thought or felt. Indeed, almost the only amusement left me was the pleasure of long flights. In a short time I found I could fly for hours, and the fields of air became my playground, but I never ventured very high, for I remembered what my mother had said about falling and killing myself.

How long this life went on, I don't know, but I grew and grew and grew so that I was ashamed of myself. I was bigger than all my brothers and sisters put together, and was not frightened of anything: for one day a dog ran at me and I struck him with my right wing and he went away limping and yelling worse even than my brother Bill. This filled me with pride, but I should have liked to have had some one to tell it to.

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Indeed, it was the loneliness of my life which made me take the next step. On the other side of the pond there was a farmhouse and yard and many broods of hens, who were very proud indeed of their breed; the Anglo-Dorkings. Unable at times to stand the misery of my lonely state, I crossed the pond and took to moping with these creatures and listening to their talk.

An old hen, with some half-grown chickens was the first to speak to me, and I paid her many compliments by way of thanks. I couldn't help smiling, however, when she took all my courtesy praise as merited, and confided to me that when young the biggest rooster in the yard, an old Cochin with hairy legs, had called her "The Angel of the World." This surprised me, for she was both old and ugly and could never, I thought, have been pretty. Two of her chickens were friendly to me, but their brethren eyed me askance and at once began to rag me for my thick legs and the size and shape of my feet.

The better I knew the hens, the less I liked them. They were just as base and even dirtier than the ducks: they all ate greedily and were cruelly selfish and indifferent to others' pain.

One day, I saw the two pullets I liked flirting with

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same young roosters; when entreated too nearly they ran away, it is true, but I saw that their flight was only pretended coldness put on to increase the ardor of the suitors; in reality they were both delighted.

The Anglo-Dorking view of life was just as timid as that of the ducks. When the chickens wanted to stretch their wings and fly, the mother hen told them it was very wrong, and when I argued with her, I soon saw that she only said this in order to have all her chickens about her, and so gratify at once her vanity and her mother love. If I ventured to suggest that all one's powers should be used, she flew out at what she called my vile immorality, and assured me that no child of hers would ever listen to such mad unreason.

One day when the mother hen was talking to the old Cochin, I wandered with the rest down to the shore of the lake. There the dancing, cool water tempted me, and I waded in and swam about rejoicing in my skill and strength. One or two of the chickens ventured into the water in emulation; but they nearly got drowned, and I had to spoon them out with my bill. They were wretched little creatures who couldn't even swim, and the cold water made them very uncomfortable, and gave them colds. When the mother hen came down and found

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them, she was very angry with me, and told me she would have me punished if I didn't behave myself better. I found that the great law among the Anglo-Dorkings was to do as others did, for if you didn't, they all condemned you as vile and bad.

I couldn't help asking myself whether there was any reason in all their condemnations, and I soon discovered that the foundation of their morality was self-pride. They all really believed that whatever the Anglo-Dorkings did was right, and the law of the Universe. They even fashioned God in their own likeness, a superior sort of fowl, and most of them were sure that he was a true Anglo-Dorking.

They were not only conceited; but curiously self-willed and quarrelsome. They believed in fighting about everything; they decided questions of government by a dispute between the two parties and in their courts matters of right and wrong, of truth and justice even, were settled by hiring paid liars on either side to falsify facts and give a plausible coloring to patent absurdities. They went so far as to explain what they considered defects in the constitution of the Universe by inventing an evil deity which they called a devil, and by pretending

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that the god and the devil were always at war. Whenever any of them got ill through over-eating or drinking they ascribed the sickness to the malefic power of the devil, and so got rid of the necessity of blaming themselves and reforming their conduct.

Their chief amusement was a pitched battle between two cocks; and their power of eating, which they carried to gluttony, was as highly esteemed among them as courage.

One day they got up a fight, and the two cocks chosen for the combat fought for nearly an hour. Very soon one cock was over-matched, but all his fellows encouraged him to go on, till he staggered about the ring half blind, with strips of skin hanging down his neck, and bleeding from a hundred wounds. It was a dreadful and degrading spectacle, and the faces of the bystanders showed such eagerness and ghoulish satisfaction that I could stand it no longer.

“Stop, stop,” I cried, “you brutes. Don’t you see that the poor thing has no chance, and can only suffer?”

At once all the Anglo-Dorkings fell upon me in fury, and drove me out of the yard.

The Anglo-Dorkings didn’t talk so much or so loudly as the ducks: indeed, they were rather silent

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except after a fight or birth or some unusual occurrence; then they crowed and bragged and flapped their wings as loudly as ever they could.

The habit these animals had of bragging and crowing was absolutely ridiculous. When I first heard one of their chiefs crow for a full quarter of an hour about the virtues of the Anglo-Dorkings I burst out laughing, which was taken in very bad part: I was told that self-respect was natural in an Anglo-Dorking; but it was not their self-respect which struck me, but their extravagant vainglory.

Gradually I came to understand that their inordinate conceit and belief in their own virtues was the secret of their strength. It gave them the power of banding together when threatened by any enemy. When a rat once appeared in the farmyard and wanted to make a meal off one of the little fluffy chicks the hens stood together as a rampart in defense, and the cocks went forward to attack the intruder, who thought it best to get away while he could; and even when a hawk hovered above the yard, the hens, though they retreated, covered the little ones with their wings, protecting them at the risk of their own lives.

This conduct seemed to me admirable. The Anglo-Dorkings were strong from this virtue of

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union, and from a power of breeding which was quite extraordinary. They were always bringing forth fresh broods, which, as soon as they grew up, used to fend for themselves.

The worst of it was that any virtue they possessed was always obscured by some counterbalancing vice, or by some brainless hypocrisy or make-believe which robbed it of all savor. For example, it seemed to me as to all animals that our bodily desires should be satisfied, of course in moderation. But the Anglo-Dorkings indulged in over-eating, and especially in over-drinking, to such an extent that in middle age seven out of ten of them were unwieldy fat and suffering from the diseases incident to shameful excess and grossness. I felt no shame in any natural desire so long as it was under due restraint and subordinated to reason of some higher purpose; but they pretended that hens had no natural sex-feeling, and insisted on bringing them up in unreasoning ignorance of their chief function.

For a long time I couldn't find any explanation of this preposterous and stupid convention. They all talked of it as the heart of their morality, declaring that chastity was the chiefest virtue in a pullet, and innocence a sort of added glory, and when I protested that innocence was only another name

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for ignorance, and that self-control of sexual desire and not chastity was the way of virtue, they showed me measureless contempt and dislike. At the same time they were not nearly so particular in regard to the young roosters, but treated their love-making with an amused tolerance: "Young roosters will be young roosters," was one of their proverbs. This and the fact that the hens had no share whatever in making the laws, of course showed that they looked upon the hens as their inferiors, and wished to keep them in a servile condition for some reason or other. It was impossible to persuade the foolish creatures that if they lifted the hens to an equality with themselves, and taught them instead of keeping them in disgraceful ignorance, they would intensify affection, and ennoble the whole commerce of love. For some vague reason the Anglo-Dorking roosters feared that if the hens were instructed they would get out of hand and cease to be subservient instruments of their pleasure, and they exalted hen-purity and innocence and constancy into the chiefest of virtues, and hedged them about with all the sanctions of religion, whereas in reality their pretended virtue was nothing better than a convention and excuse for short-sighted selfishness. For the ignorance of the pullets could in the nature of things only last

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for a short period in youth, and the chastity was sure to be forfeited before maturity.

All this hen-morality seemed to me inept and hypocritical, and in essence base; but the Anglo-Dorkings resented any discussion of the matter as proof of viciousness. Often and often I remonstrated with them, and pointed out that it was necessary to know all about the sex-function, and that it should be studied most carefully in both sexes as the central secret of life; but even the hens hid their heads under their wings while I spoke, pretending to be ashamed, while the roosters attacked me with violence. I found that I should have to keep my mouth shut and my reason in abeyance if I wanted to live among them in peace.

But, after all, it was their conceit and clannish spirit which rendered it impossible for me to live with them. True, they didn't interfere with me much, being too intent on their own affairs; but as soon as I made them aware of my existence by laughing at them, or by begging them not to fight by reasoning with them, they all fell upon me with one accord, their unanimity being really wonderful.

The more I knew of them the clearer I saw that the soul of them was self-pride. Surely there never were bipeds so pleased with themselves. One cus-

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tom they had which was exquisitely absurd, and yet was plainly the outgrowth of their extravagant self-esteem. There was a poor skinny rooster, who was so old that he could scarcely move; his comb hung down about his neck, and his tail feathers had all fallen out, and yet even the youngest and handsomest hens fluttered about him in a swarm and made up to him, flattering him in a silly and disgraceful way. I couldn't understand the reason of this, for the old rooster could never have been even a moderately good specimen, and was now weak-kneed, decrepit and querulously vain. When the young hens flattered him, and he tried to strut and crow, he looked so funny that I did not know whether to laugh or cry. But the Anglo-Dorking hens all frowned on me, and one of them told me I ought to be ashamed of myself laughing at one of their lords.

"What does that mean, a lord?" I asked.

"One of our rulers," she said.

"But why does he rule?" I asked. "Is he wiser or better than the rest of you?"

"Oh, dear, no," she replied, "but we honor him more."

"But why?" I asked, "what has he done?"

"Nothing," she replied; "he's the son of his father."

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"I suppose he is," I answered, "but what did his father do?"

"Nothing," she replied, "that's his nobility."

I could not understand their reverence for useless, worthless creatures, but merely to question its validity got one into disgrace with the Anglo-Dorkings. They resented any criticism of their beliefs or customs, and were amusingly certain that all such criticism springs from ignorance or inferiority. My questions about their lords, and the reverence they paid them, caused them to look on me with suspicion and dislike: they began to call me a foreigner, and spoke of ducks as an inferior species of creatures. I didn't mind this much, for I felt no desire to stand up for the ducks who had cast me off; but when the Anglo-Dorkings began to insist that my admiration for what was right and reasonable was a sign of shallowness, I began to answer back, and the situation grew strained. They threatened and I scoffed, for I was young, and it soon became apparent that there would be an outbreak of violence. Curiously enough, a very small cause determined the catastrophe.

I have already told how the ducks used to eat scraps of offal. The custom seemed to me filthy and unhealthy; but they excused it by pleading hun-

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ger. The Anglo-Dorkings, however, went much further; they hung dead meat up till it became putrid, and then gobbled it down at feasts and ceremonial dinners. And when one turned from the loathsome mess they used to remark complacently that "only the well-born could really enjoy the aristocratic flavor of high game."

I made fun of this argument, and thereby fell into utter disgrace. In their anger they invented all sorts of slanders about me: "I had been expelled from among the ducks," they said, "for nearly killing one of my smaller brethren." "I lived," another story ran, "by stealing from the game larders." No invention was too improbable, no lie too absurd for the Anglo-Dorkings to believe about any creature who ventured to criticize them.

I discovered incidentally that they had outlawed and expelled some of their noblest and best for no other reason than that those wise ones had dared to find fault with some of their customs. Even a certain lord, who, in spite of his opportunities as a parasite and hanger-on, had developed some individuality and courage, was disgraced for making fun of them, and hounded out of the country as immoral because he couldn't be sufficiently hypocritical or servile to win their favor by flattery.

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At length their animosity to me became active. I was challenged to fight by this cock and by that, and as soon as I flew up high to evade attack they called me a coward, and when I struck with the elbows of my wings, with which I was able to hit hard, I was set upon by the whole crowd for striking unfairly, and was so bepicked and bespurred that I was glad to get away with whole bones. I fled for my life and they stood together in a crowd and flapped their wings in triumph, and crowed in unison for some time after I had passed out of their sight.

Life soon became tragic to me in its loneliness. The ducks feared me; the Anglo-Dorkings hated me; and when I passed to the other end of the pond and met the geese I fared but little better. True, they were not nearly so clannish as the Anglo-Dorkings; they had more respect, too, for originality and individuality. I could never make out why they were called "geese," or rather why the word "goose" among the hens had come to mean something foolish. For really these geese were more intelligent and better educated than the Anglo-Dorkings, or even the Cochins, and had a far keener sense of what was reasonable as opposed to custom and convention. Taking them all in all, I thought the geese superior to the Anglo-Dorkings in many respects:

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they were more civilized, more courteous, with a higher intellectual life.

In particular they found the hen-morality as absurd as I did; and the hypocrisy and self-applause of the Anglo-Dorkings were as distasteful to them as to me. I might have lived among the geese in comparative happiness had I happened to be born a goose, but their language was very difficult to me, and in spite of all my efforts I never entirely mastered it or made it my own.

I took to living more and more by myself, and resolved not to depend in any degree upon others. After all, I used to say, consoling myself, the sky does not belong to the Anglo-Dorkings, and the fields of air and the sunshine by day, and the winds and stars by night were as much mine as theirs. If they had made me an outcast and pariah, what, after all, did it matter? My life was mine to live as I chose, and the days were mine to spend nobly if I pleased. And so I took to the life of a solitary, and grew strong in loneliness, though always a little sad.

One day I was out in the pond when something made me look up, and I saw a skein of great birds coming down the sky; the sun turned their wings to silver. When they neared the wood I thought they would alight, but at the last moment they rose

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again to clear it, and soon went high up in the blue, and dwindled away, but one that seemed weary lagged behind and came beating down nearer and nearer, and at last splashed in the water close to the island. To my astonishment it was just like me, but evidently very tired, so I went over to it, and when I came near I saw that it was more graceful than I was, with slighter neck and more rounded breast, so I said:

“Good day, miss, you are an Ugly Duckling, too.”

She turned on me at once. “Duckling, indeed, you don’t know what you are talking about; I am a swan, as you are.”

“Am I, indeed?” I asked, in amazement, and then in a breath, “what is a swan?”

“The finest bird in the world.”

“Really?” I cried, “I thought ducks and hens were the finest birds.”

“Little tame beasts,” she said, “fit for nothing but to quack and crow and breed. I suppose this little pond is theirs: I would never have come into it if I hadn’t been very tired from the long flight.”

“Why do you call the swans the finest birds in the world?” I ventured to ask.

“Because we are the Children of Light,” she re-

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plied proudly, "and follow the Sun round the world."

"Are you going there now?" I asked.

"Yes, to the other side of the world," she replied proudly, "to the land of sunshine; but now I am tired and hungry," she added, with a little smile.

"Oh, come with me," I said, "and I'll show you where you can get such nice things to eat," and I guided her round the island to my quiet eating place under the trees, and there she ate and drank so daintily I could have kissed her: and afterwards she preened herself and made her toilet, and I watched her with eyes rounded with admiration. I saw she was very tired, so I asked her wouldn't she like to sleep, and led her again to the quietest place in the whole pond, and she said I must wake her before the sun got low, for she must join the rest that night at a lake far away. I kept watch while she slept, but all the time my heart was burning within me, for I knew if she went away and left me I should die of grief. Life by myself seemed ten times as lonely and miserable since I had seen her and admired her delicious beauty, and I simply couldn't bear her to go away and forget me. Tears came burning into my eyes at the thought. Besides, I, too, had always hated the darkness and gloom of the sad Northern

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winter; though I had been taught it was wrong to love the light as I did. Now, however, that I knew it was right, I was filled with the desire to fly far away and see the world and have great Adventures; for I, too, was a Child of the Light.

Suddenly the resolve came; I would fly away with her. My heart beat in my throat with the hope. I could remain on the wing for hours and hours, all day long if I chose, for I was very hard and strong, thanks to my lonely life. The thought of her companionship thrilled me and encouraged me, and caressing her in my heart as she slept I resolved to go with her if she would let me to the end of the world. I felt a little sorry about leaving the ducks, but, after all, they didn't care for me, and I loved the newcomer in quite a different way. She seemed to me grace itself and beautiful exceedingly, and proud as a queen, and I wondered if she would ever let me touch her even with the tips of my wings.

While I was cruising about her quite silently and watching her, the swan awoke and at once, to my astonishment, began another toilet. She flittered the water over her shoulders and laughed as the drops ran over her breast and sparkled on her pearly throat.

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I asked her was she quite rested, and she said gaily:

“Oh, yes”; and I wanted to know why she hadn’t slept till I woke her, and she said she supposed it was the anxiety, because now she had rested, she would have to go. She thanked me prettily for the food I had given her and said that really my resting place near the island was very sweet.

Emboldened by her kindness, I asked her could I go with her? She turned to me and said:

“Of course, if you like, there is nothing to prevent you.”

That was not what I wanted, so with a lump in my throat, I asked: “Would you like me to go?”

She looked at me a little while as if considering, which frightened me quite cold, but at length she said bravely:

“I should like you to come because you are a man swan, and the lake on the other side of the world is such a long, long way off and the others are all quite old, and I get a little frightened flying in the dark all by myself. Sometimes I scarcely know what to do when the wind gets high and I am away up out of sight of earth.”

“Oh, that must be fine!” I cried. “I’m very strong and should like it, above everything: it is so

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good of you to let me go with you: I will do everything for you: I will be your servant and when you sleep I will cruise round you to protect you, you are so lovely," I added, half afraid.

She shook her head a little at that, and said she didn't like compliments. But I don't think she was really displeased, for the next moment she looked at me again with kindness.

"We must go now," she said; "we are wasting time," and the next moment she sprang out of the water into the air and I followed. Up and up and up she went in great rings, and I beside her wing-beat for wing-beat, but I had to restrain myself and beat slowly; for I was much the stronger and did not want to hurry her. And after we had gone steadily up and up for some time, she cried to me:

"Look down now and take leave of your duck pond."

And I looked down and the great height frightened me, for the pond was nothing but a gray speck in the green, miles and miles below, and my heart failed me, for I remembered what my mother had said, that I should fall one day and kill myself, and for a moment I fluttered in the air, but as the swan turned her head to see what was the matter, I struck out again, for I was ashamed of my fear. I went

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right up to her with strong wing-stroke exulting, for she was beside me, and I felt it was better a thousand times to be killed falling from heaven than to live in a duck pond.

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AN old-fashioned square house on Long Island, set in a clearing of pine trees: a break in the cliff shows a little triangle of sandy beach and the waters of the Sound dancing in the moonlight. Half a dozen men are sitting about on the stoop looking over the silvery waters.

The evening papers had published an account of Mrs. Amory's will which showed that she had left half a million dollars to a nursing home for mill-children in Philadelphia. The news set us all talking of the wonderful work she had done and her self-sacrifice. Most of us assumed that it was a religious motive that had induced this rich and, it was said, handsome woman to give years of her life to improving the lot of the city's waifs and strays.

The ladies had left us and gone up to bed; but we still discussed the matter. Suddenly Charlie Railton turned to Judge Barnett of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, who sat with his chair tilted back against the wall ruminating.

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"Say, Judge, what do you think of it anyway? I'd like to hear your opinion."

"I have no opinion on the matter," replied the Judge, taking the cigar out of his mouth and speaking very slowly, "I don't know women well enough to be sure about anything where they're concerned."

"Plead guilty, Judge," cried Railton, who was about thirty years of age, "plead guilty and throw yourself on the mercy of the Court: I guess you know women better than most of us, and they're pretty easy to know, it seems to me."

"I used to think so, too," said the Judge, "but I got kind o' puzzled once and I've never been sure since."

"How was that, Judge?" cried our host, one of the boldest speculators on the New York Stock Exchange, scenting a mystery.

"It's a long story," said Barnett deliberately, "and it's pretty late already."

We all protested and called for the story and the Judge began:

"It takes one a long way back, I'm afraid; back to the late sixties, and it's autobiographical, too; I guess it has every fault."

"Go on," we cried in chorus.

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After being admitted to the Bar—he resumed—I went up to my mother's place in Maine, to rest. Along in the winter I got pneumonia on a shooting-trip and could not shake it off. I crawled through the summer and then made up my mind to go to California or somewhere warm for the winter; I had had enough of snow and blizzards. I spent the winter in Santa Barbara and got as fit as a young terrier.

In the spring I went to 'Frisco and there in a gymnasium and boxing saloon got to know a man who was about the best athlete I ever struck. Winterstein might have been heavyweight champion if he had trained, and he was handsome enough for a stage lover. He was just under six feet in height, with bold expression and good features; dark hair in little curls all over his head and agate-dark eyes which grew black when he was excited or angry.

I found he was a better man physically than I was, and that was the beginning of our friendship; we soon became intimate and he told me all about his early life. He was born in the North of England, and became a sailor in the English navy, but he could not stand the rigid discipline, poor food, and harsh treatment. He deserted in Quebec while still a lad, and made his way to New York. He

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had not had much education, but he had improved what he had by reading. Like most men of intelligence who have not had a college training, he set great store by books and book learning, and got me to help him with mathematics. He had a captain's certificate, it appeared, but he wanted to know navigation thoroughly; he surprised me one day by telling me he owned a little vessel which was nearly ready for sea.

"I have just had her overhauled," he said; "would you like to come and see her? She's lying off Meiggs's."

"What do you do with her?" I questioned, full of curiosity.

"I go pearling," he said; "pearls are found nearly all round the Gulf of California. The fisher-folk rake in the oysters and lay them on the beach till they get bad and open of themselves. The children collect the pearls and keep them until I come round. I paid for the craft and have a couple of thousand dollars put by from last year's work."

"But where did you learn about pearls?" I asked.

"I worked for a man once and picked it up. Sometimes I make a little mistake, but not often. You see we go to out-of-the-way places where we

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reckon to give about a quarter what the pearls are worth. That leaves a wide margin for mistakes."

"But I had no idea that there were pearls in the Gulf," I said.

"Why not come along and see for yourself," he said. "I'll be starting in a week. The schooner had to have her bottom cleaned and the copper repaired, that's what's hung me up for this last month or so. Now I'm about right for another year. If you'd like to come, I'd be glad to have you."

"And make me mate?" I asked laughing.

"Commander," he replied seriously, "and you shall have ten per cent. of the profits."

"I'll think it over and let you know," was my answer.

The adventure tempted me, the strange life and work, the novelty of the thing: I resolved to go pearling.

I went with Winterstein to the wharf and he showed his craft to me. She looked like a toy vessel, a little schooner, a fifty-footer of about forty tons. She sat on the water like a duck, a little New England model with beautiful lines. Winterstein introduced me to his first mate, Donkin, and his second mate, Crawford. Donkin was a big lump of a fellow, six feet two in height, broad in proportion

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and brawny, a good seaman. Crawford I soon found out was an even better sailor and more intelligent, though of only average strength.

"What about the crew?" I asked Winterstein when we were alone in the little cabin.

"I want one more man and a boy," he replied laughing at my surprised face.

"But," I retorted, "you can't have three officers and one man."

"It's like this," he said: "Donkin has only been a second mate, but he gets a first mate's certificate provided he stays with me a year, and the same thing with Crawford. The work is not hard," he added apologetically, "they get good wages and a lift in rank and it suits them, and so I get first-rate work cheap. Four or five men can manage this craft easy so long as we don't strike a cyclone and there ain't much dirty weather in the Gulf."

A couple of days later Winterstein told me shyly that he had been married recently, and after I had congratulated him, he insisted that I must come and be introduced to the prettiest girl in California. All the way uptown he praised his young wife, and the praise I found was not extravagant. Mrs. Winterstein was charming: tall and fair with Irish gray eyes; her shyness and love of Winterstein put

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a sort of aureole about her. She was of Irish parentage: before her marriage her name had been Rose O'Connor. Nothing would do but I must call her Rose at once. The pair lived in a little frame house on the side of the bluff, where now there is a famous park. An old Irishwoman did the chores for Rose and mothered and scolded her just as she had done before her marriage. Rose, I learned, had been a teacher in the High School. In the next few days I saw a good deal of her. She was doing up the cabin and buying knick-knacks for the cabin and tiny stateroom, and I naturally ran her errands and tried to save her trouble.

Whenever I ventured a shy compliment she always told me I must see her sister Daisy, who was at Sacramento in a finishing school. Daisy was lovely and Daisy was clever; there was no one like Daisy in her sister's eyes.

* * * * *

It was a perfect June morning with just air enough to make the sun dance on the ripples, when at length we were all ready on board and starting out of the bay.

Our crew had been completed by a young darky called Abraham Lincoln, who at once took over the

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cooking, and a sailor called Dyer, who was a little lame, but handy enough at his work.

The first part of the cruise was uneventful: it might have been a yachting trip. Day after day we sailed along in delightful sunshine, with a six- or eight-knot breeze. The perfect conditions would have been monotonous had we not amused ourselves with fishing. One day I remember we got rather rough weather and when Winterstein, Donkin and myself took our bearings next day we found that we had been swept some distance to the westward.

It was Crawford who solved the enigma for us. He told us there was a current called the West Wind Drift, which sets across the Pacific from East to West as if making for 'Frisco and then flows down the coast from North to South till it meets the North Equatorial current which comes from the South and sweeps out to the West, carrying the tail end, so to speak, of the Drift with it. Where the two opposing currents meet off the South Californian coast, one often finds a heavy sea and variable cross-winds. But as soon as we turned into the Gulf the fine weather began again.

The trading which I had hoped would be full of adventure turned out to be quite simple and tame. We ran along the shore, stopping wherever

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there was a village. Usually we dropped anchor pretty close in and rowed ashore. At nine places out of ten Winterstein was known. The fishermen brought out their little cotton-bags of pearls and we bought them. Curiously enough, the black pearl, so esteemed to-day, had then no value at all. Whenever we bought a packet of white pearls, the black ones were thrown in as not worth estimating. The pink pearls, too, had no price, unless they were exceptionally large or beautifully shaped, and even then they were very cheap. I began to collect the black pearls to make a necklace for Mrs. Winterstein. I was half in love with her I think from the beginning. She was not only very pretty but laughter-loving, and girlish, and her little matronly airs sat drolly upon her. Everyone on board liked her, I don't know why. I suppose she wanted to please us all; for she was full of consideration for everyone. I have never seen any woman who appealed so unconsciously and so directly to the heart, and her happiness was something that had to be seen to be believed. She simply adored her husband, waited on him hand and foot, and pampered all his little selfishnesses. She was only unhappy when away from him, or when it was rough weather and she was sea-sick. Curiously enough, in spite of

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the long cruise, she never became a good sailor. In fine weather she was all right, but the moment *The Rose* commenced to bob about, Mrs. Winterstein used to retire to her cabin.

I told no one about the necklace. I simply annexed all the black pearls and determined to get them strung together as soon as we got back to 'Frisco. I never landed without asking after them, and even went so far as to buy some which were being used by the native children as trinkets. I remember once coming across an extraordinary specimen as big as a marble, perfectly round, and with a perfect skin. We were passing a cabin where a couple of mestizo girls of fourteen and sixteen were seated on the sand playing a game of bones, which I think must be as old as the world, for the Greeks knew it as astragalos. You throw the round bones up into the air and turn your hand round quickly and catch them on the back. Among the five bones was a black pearl, which I admired at once and bought for a quarter, I think. I can still see the half-naked girl-child as she handed it to me. She stood on one leg like a stork, and with her right foot rubbed her left ankle, while glancing at me half-shyly out of great liquid dark eyes. She had only a red calico wrap about her body, out of

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the folds of which one small round amber breast showed: but she was evidently unconscious of her nudity—a child in mind, a woman in body.

I have absolutely nothing interesting to tell of this first cruise. We stopped once where the sea must have receded from the land, for the town was some four miles inland. I have forgotten the name of the place, but it was quite a town—some two or three thousand inhabitants. The smell of the oysters on the sea beach, I remember, was overpowering. Thousands and thousands of bushels had been left to rot. Our harvest of pearls here was so large that Winterstein resolved to go back to 'Frisco at once and market his goods. We were all tired of fish and biscuits, varied with sow-belly fiery with salt and black with age.

The return trip was just as uneventful as the voyage out. Winterstein's profits were beyond all his former experiences. After paying all expenses, giving me my tenth, and dividing another tenth between the two mates, he cleared up something like six thousand dollars for two months' work.

He was naturally eager to get to sea again, but there was a difficulty. Rose found that her sister had left Sacramento, and had come to live in 'Frisco. She had got work, too, I gathered, in a shop and

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refused absolutely to be a schoolgirl any longer or to accept her sister's advice. Rose was anxious about her and resolved to take her on board with us for the next cruise. But for a long time Miss Daisy refused to come: she preferred, it appeared, to be entirely on her own and it was only when Winterstein joined Rose in solicitation that she finally consented. I was rather eager to see this very self-willed and independent young lady.

I was quite ready for another trip. It would please my mother, I thought, if I went back with a couple of thousand dollars in my pocket, and I had got my black pearls strung as a necklace for Rose.

Winterstein warned me that the next trip would perhaps not be so profitable, as he would leave out the chief places, which he had already touched at, and go to the more remote stations.

"Pearling," he said, "is like everything else in life—the easiest work is the best paid." His philosophy was not very deep though his observation was exact enough.

We arranged to start one afternoon. I had been in town making purchases. It was wretched weather. A Nor'easter had sprung up and blew sand through the streets in clouds. I only hoped that the departure would be postponed. I found

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Winterstein waiting impatiently for me, and his wife's sister, too, was on deck in spite of the rough weather. Winterstein introduced me to her. Daisy O'Connor did not make much impression on me at first; she was girlish-young and did not seem to be anything like so good-looking as her sister. True, she had large dark-brown eyes and good features, but she was smaller than Rose, and without Rose's brilliant coloring or charm of appeal. She treated me rather coolly, I thought. Winterstein seemed to be in a great hurry to get off.

"Why not put off going till to-morrow?" I asked. "As soon as we get outside she'll duck into it half-way up her jib."

"To-morrow's Friday," remarked Miss Daisy.

"Surely you're not superstitious?" I laughed.

"Yes, I am," replied the girl, and a peculiar character of decision came into her face and voice.

"You know the old rhyme?"

She questioned me with a look, and I repeated the old chanty:

Monday for health
And Tuesday for wealth
And Wednesday the best day of all,
Thursday for losses
And Friday for crosses
And Saturday no day at all . . .

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"Thursday will be a bad start," I added.

"I like a bad start," she retorted; "a good start often means a bad ending." She spoke bitterly, I thought.

"A resolute little thing," I said to myself carelessly, while getting into my sea-togs.

In five minutes the anchor was up and the sails set and we were beating out to sea in the teeth of the gale. In the bay the wind came in gusts, but as we held toward Lime Point it settled down to a steady drive which heeled us over till the lee scuppers were under water. Every moment it blew harder. When we went about and opened out the Golden Gate, *The Rose* went over, over till it looked as if she would turn turtle. I laid hold of the main rigging to keep my feet and get the spindrift out of my eyes. Ten feet from me was the girl with one hand on a stay, her slight figure braced against the gale, evidently enjoying the experience. A different voyage from the first, I thought to myself, and under different auspices. But the work and danger stopped thought. As soon as we were out of the Golden Gate and clear of Point Bonita the sea began to pile up and break in masses on the bar. We were in for a dirty night. In five minutes we were all wet to the skin. The girl had gone

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below. The companion, skylights and hatches were all battened down and made snug and not a moment too soon. The sea on the bar was terrific: again and again the green water buried the decks, but as soon as we had got outside and turned her bows southward, the gale came fair on the quarter and the little "saucer" as I called *The Rose* made good weather of it, lifting easily to the great combers and swooping along their shoulders into the night, for all the world like some white sea-bird.

The coming on board of Daisy O'Connor altered everything. I was too young at the time to explain, or even understand what was taking place. The interest which used to center in Rose and Winterstein and abaft the companion, now followed Daisy all over the ship. For the girl was never long in one place and divided her favors impartially among all the men on board. Now she walked his watch talking to Donkin, or leaned against the rail chatting to Crawford, or sat discussing a book with me. She was less with Winterstein than with any of us, which was not remarked, because the weather still continued boisterous and gave him a good deal to do between the stateroom in which his wife spent most of her time and the wave-swept deck.

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In every way this cruise was different from the first, less pleasant, if more exciting. The first thing I noticed was that Donkin, who appeared to like Winterstein on the first voyage, now disliked him. Winterstein spoke sharply to him one day about the way the jib was sitting:

"That jib's shivering," he said, "it's not set flat, take a pull at it."

Donkin looked at him and said sulkily:

"That's because she's stecred too free."

"That's all you know about it," replied Winterstein cheerfully, "at any rate take a pull at the sheet."

The look of contempt and anger which Donkin threw at the skipper surprised and shocked me. I did not even then notice that Daisy was standing to windward almost between them. It only occurred to me long afterward. *The Rose*, which had been the most comfortable craft in the world, had become an ordinary sort of vessel.

The weather was very unsettled; usually we had more than enough wind and a heavy lop of sea, and the little craft, which was very light and shallow as a saucer, tossed about like a cork.

Three days out of four Rose O'Connor kept to her berth, and never showed at all even at meal

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times, and Daisy O'Connor took her place on the deck and in the cabin as well. Day after day Winterstein and I lunched with her alone. The door leading into Rose's stateroom was generally closed. It was impossible not to be interested in Daisy. She was very intelligent and self-centered, and as reserved as Rose was ingenuous and open. She struck me as being much older than Rose. She was a sort of enigma, and I could not help wanting to find the key to it. She never praised or complimented one as Rose did; her praise was a word or two, which seemed wrung from her, a tantalizing, proud creature.

One day we were running along under some bluffs; the wind was light and fitful; we had all the plain sails set. Rose was on deck, seated in a cane arm-chair to windward of the companion. Winterstein was a consummate seaman, and that day seemed a little anxious; he kept running down to look at the barometer, and had a word or two with Crawford, I remembered afterward. Neither of them seemed to like the look of the weather. I paid small attention to externals, for Daisy was walking the deck with me, and I was telling her how I intended to put up my shingle in New York that winter and start my law office. She was look-

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ing her very best and I had begun to wonder whether she was not even more attractive than her sister. When she got excited, or when the wind blew a little sharply, her white skin would take on the faint pink tinge of a sea-shell, and when interested her eyes would grow large and deepen in color. Altogether I was beginning to think her fascinating. Unconsciously I was transferring to her my old allegiance to Rose. Rose was not at her best this cruise; she looked washed out and pale; she did what she could, but the bad weather was against her. Clearly the spiritual center of gravity, so to speak, of the vessel, had changed, and I certainly was not blind to the fact that Daisy gave me more of her time than she gave to anyone else, though she would often have long talks with Donkin. The person she spent least time with was distinctly Winterstein.

While we were walking up and down talking, the wind suddenly ceased, and the little craft shot up at once on an even keel and set Rose's chair sliding. It was stopped by Winterstein, who took his wife below, and as we resumed our walk again I noticed that the look Daisy threw at her sister was more than indifferent; there was contempt in it. In a minute or two Winterstein came up again and

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stood near the main sheet and every now and then we passed him. The wind was blowing again steadily and the schooner heeled over under it and all went on as before. Suddenly, without any warning, the wind veered round and blew from almost the opposite point of the compass. With a slash and crash the sails came flapping over our heads and the boom smashed inboard, as if we were going to gibe. The deck from slanting jumped level. I caught the companion to hold myself. Daisy was thrown past me and would have had a nasty fall, had not Winterstein caught her in his arms. She tore herself loose angrily, and he sprang to the mainsheet and drew it taut and stopped the boom from going over. The helmsman, Crawford, had been almost as quick. No sooner had the squall struck us than he put the helm up and the next moment *The Rose's* bow fell off and her sails filled again and she went on as before. In the nick of time Winterstein eased away the mainsail.

The fine thing in the occurrence was Winterstein's extraordinary speed and strength. There he stood holding the mainsheet, his magnificent athlete's figure etched against the sky. Before I had taken in his splendid unconscious pose, Daisy made an inarticulate exclamation as if she had

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caught her breath; but when I looked at her, her face was as composed as usual and without expression.

I thought at the time that the weather was chiefly responsible for the change in the moral atmosphere. It is impossible to be good-tempered if you are wet through by day and up half the night shortening sail or ready to shorten it. For the schooner after all was only a small craft, and heavily sparred even for summer weather. The sails, it was evident, were too big for her, though Winterstein declared he had never seen such weather in September. I had never had harder work. Three days out of the four we worked all day long and half through the night. The little craft was undermanned. And though we were all strong, five or six pairs of hands cannot do the work of ten or twelve, and no man can be in two places at once. Our tempers began to get ragged.

On the first trip Crawford had been a great friend of mine; he was really a fine sailor and intelligent besides, and whenever I wanted to know anything, I used to go and talk with him, and even in 'Frisco I took him out with me to the theater once or twice, and was very much amused by his

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shrewd comments. But one day he called me to help him hauling in the jib.

"Bear a hand, damn you," he cried. I was amazed.

"What's the matter, Crawford?" I said afterward, but he turned on his heel and muttered something about "lazy" in such a tone that I replied:

"Lazy or not, you had better curse someone else."

But afterward, in cool blood, I could not help asking myself what it all meant. I could find no reason for Crawford's change of manner. "Lazy" stuck in my mind. The day before had been fine and I had sat in a chair near Daisy, and read Whittier to her, but that could have nothing to do with Crawford I decided, who seemed to me quite old: he must have been nearly forty.

The weather made little difference to Daisy. She was up on deck in all weathers, and seemed fairly to revel in a hard gale. When it was dry she used to wear a tight-knitted thing, like a long blue jersey, which outlined her slight figure, and when it was wet she would put on a waterproof, and tuck her hair inside a close hood, which seemed to frame

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her face lovingly; I liked her best when it simply blew hard, and we could walk about and talk.

About this time I began to notice that Donkin was trying in his uncouth way to make up to her. He seized every opportunity of talking to her and advising her. It was a remark of Crawford's that opened my eyes. They were standing together chatting one day when Crawford looked at me over his shoulder and said:

"She does not care for him any more than she cares for the mainmast, but the big fool thinks she does."

A pang of surprise and anger told me that I cared more than I admitted to myself. The idea of Donkin, great, ugly, sullen Donkin, side by side with that beauty and fine intelligence.

"Beauty and the beast," I said. Crawford looked at me and turned aside: I realized that I had spoken bitterly.

All this time there seemed to be less change in Winterstein than in any of the rest of us. Day after day and night after night he did two or three men's work, and did not seem to feel fatigue or need sleep. He was helped, of course, by his magnificent health and strength. He appeared to take it as a matter of course that I should monop-

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olize Daisy, and we talked together at meal times almost as if he were not in the cabin. Our talk was mostly of books and works of art in which it was impossible for him to join. He listened indeed, but could hardly expect to interest her in books as I could. Sometimes I read scraps of Shelley or Swinburne to her, and it was a treat to see her face flush and change with the varying emotions. Her eyes were extraordinary; they drew the very soul out of one and tempted one perpetually to more passionate expression. Talks begun in the cabin continued with us on deck. No one made me talk as she did. She was something more than a sympathetic listener. She made one want to draw forth her interest or rare word of praise. But if she showed intense emotion about a piece of verse or some wonderful cloud-effect, her interest was always impersonal. As soon as the talk became at all sentimental she would break it off and her eyes would grow inexpressive as brown stones.

After we had rounded the peninsula and turned into the Gulf, the weather suddenly improved. Day after day we floated along with a light breeze under a pale-blue sky, tremulous with excess of light. Day after day now Rose came up and we had tea and even dinner on deck. But somehow or other Rose

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never regained her position: we liked her and turned to her, attracted by her smiling good humor, but the spiritual interest of the ship was centered in her sister. Everything in Rose was open, comprehensible, from her flowerlike beauty to her manifest devotion to Winterstein, but Daisy was a closed book, a tantalizing puzzle; for all of us she had the charm of the unknown and unexplored. She entered into no direct competition with her sister; she simply kept apart as a rival queen and there could be no doubt that her court was better attended. You flattered Rose and paid compliments to her, the other you studied and sought to interest. Rose was always more than fair to her sister. In fact she praised her and made up to her timidly, like the rest of us. One day Winterstein had gone down for a pair of loose boots for his wife, as she wanted to walk. While he put the boots on we naturally talked of feet. I praised Rose's feet, but she would not have it:

"My feet are huge," she said, "in comparison to Daisy's. I take fours and she takes ones, don't you, Daisy? Show them."

Daisy looked at her with a little smile, but did not follow her advice.

"Come, Daisy, show us," I said.

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She turned smiling inscrutable eyes on me and that was all. Suddenly Winterstein laughed.

"Daisy wants to spare us," he said. Her face hardened.

"Daisy does not think it a matter of any moment," she said, "but if you are all agreed, there you are," and she pulled her feet together and drew up her skirts deliberately, showing tiny feet and two nervous, slight ankles. But almost at the same moment she sprang to her feet:

"Are you coming?" she threw to me, and walked down the deck.

"What wonderful feet you have," I said, "almost too small for your figure."

"Why should very small feet and hands be admired?" she said, turning to me.

I could not give her the answer that came into my mind, and hesitated, seeking some other explanation.

"It's traditional. . . . I hardly know," I hesitated and sprang to knowledge for evasion. "All Greek statues of women have large feet," I remarked.

"But there must be a reason," she said, and her eyes probed mine.

"Yes," I replied, feeling annoyed with myself

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for getting red. She took it all in coolly and then changed the conversation, perhaps she understood more than she admitted.

In the Gulf we called at various small stations and did fairly well with the pearls. Rose had given Daisy my black pearl necklace, I noticed: it seemed strange to me that all the affection should be on Rose's side.

The weather got finer and finer: it became so hot indeed that Winterstein fixed up an awning from the companion to the poop. We used to keep the awning cool by throwing a couple of buckets of water on it before Rose came on deck, for she felt the heat intensely.

About this time I began to guess that her paleness and languor had a cause, and we all felt more kindly toward her if that were possible. But the fact itself seemed to set her more and more apart, putting her outside our circle. The heat seemed to affect Daisy no more than it affected the rest of us. I used to get up nearly every morning and bathe, and when there was a wind Donkin or Crawford used to throw a bucket of water over me and I hopped about on the for'castle to dry myself. If there was no wind I went overboard, keeping near the vessel because of the sharks. One day I had

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just run up after my bath, I was still drying my head, when Daisy came on deck.

"Oh, how I should like a swim," she said. "I've been so hot in that stewy cabin."

She did not look hot, she was always the picture of neatness. But Donkin put his oar in at once.

"Nothing easier, Miss Daisy."

When had he commenced calling her by her Christian name, I wondered angrily.

"Oh, but the sharks," she said. "If one were to bite a foot off, or a hand, I should kill myself. I do not mind death, but I would not be deformed for anything.

"We could rig a sail out on the yard, so that you could have four feet of water, and yet be perfectly safe," he replied.

"Oh, how splendid," she said, "I wish you would."

"In ten minutes, Miss Daisy," he said, and turned away to the work, Crawford following at his heels.

"I must go down and get ready," she said, "but won't you come in with me, you won't mind bathing again, it will give me courage?"

"I have no bathing things," I said, "but I can probably get a suit ready for to-morrow."

"What a pity," she pouted, "bathing alone is no fun. Can't you make something do?"

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"I daresay I can," I replied.

"Please," and she disappeared down the companion.

I went below and got myself ready with a loose flannel shirt, and a pair of duck trousers cut off at the knee, promising myself to hem them round next day. The rummaging about took me some time, and when I came on deck Daisy was already waiting and all the preparations had been made. A yard had been sheered out from the ship and stayed against the bulwark and companion. From the end of it a square sail had been let down by a cross yard at the end of the spar. The sail dipped into the water and formed a bath of perhaps twenty feet long, fifteen feet broad and four or five in depth. The gangway opened into the middle of it, and the little ladder led down to the water's edge. When I came up, Daisy was thanking them.

"Did you ever see such a perfect bath?" she said, turning to me. "Isn't it clever of them. I think you sailors," and she looked into Donkin's eyes, "can just do anything." (The fellow's weather-beaten hide flushed to brick-red.) "It was Mr. Crawford," she added, "who thought of putting the sail by the gangway. He thinks of everything."

She was diabolically clever; for the praise was

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deserved. Crawford's white face paled and he fidgetted under her eyes.

Daisy had on a little green cap, into which she had tucked her hair, and a great white bath sheet. Winterstein came up from below and stood close by.

"Will you go first?" I said.

She turned and undid the tapes at her neck, and let the bath towel slip on to the white deck. She was in pale green with knickerbockers; a little tunic cut low at the neck fell over her hips. Her arms were bare, and her legs from the knees down. Everything suited her. She was adorable—girl and woman in one. The next moment she had slid down the ladder into the sea and was swimming about. In a moment I joined her, and then she explained to me that she could never float.

"My feet always go down," she said, "and before I know it I am standing on my feet upright in the water." Again and again she tried to float, but always with the same result. I wondered if she knew how provocative she was, as she lay there on the blue surface, her little form in green and white with the wet dress clinging to her figure and outlining it. I think she must have known, for there were the men leaning down from the bulwarks, all staring at her with hot eyes. When she came on

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deck she did not disappear at once into the bath cloak, which Donkin held ready for her. She stood there among the men on deck in her semi-nudity, and cried:

“Oh, I have enjoyed myself; it has been perfect. I am so much obliged to you,” she said, turning to Donkin, “and to you, too, Mr. Crawford.”

I noticed that Dyer at the helm devoured her with his eyes while Abraham’s black face grinned from the for’castle hatch.

“It was kind of all of you,” she went on, “the water was not a bit cold. You will put the sail down to-morrow morning, won’t you?” she said to Donkin, as she stretched her arms backwards over her head to get the cloak. The movement threw her little breasts upward into sharp relief; the next moment she had drawn the cloak about her with a little gay laugh and disappeared down the companionway. It was as if the sun had gone out. For a moment we men stared at each other, and then I went forward to change my things while Donkin and Crawford busied themselves getting in the sail. Suddenly I heard Winterstein’s voice:

“Here, you Abraham, bear a hand with the swab here and dry up this water. As you’ve come on deck you may as well do something.” I turned in

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surprise, the tone was strangely hard and menacing, utterly unlike Winterstein, but I did not catch a glimpse of his face, for as soon as he had given the order he turned away to stare at the land over the poop.

What was the meaning of it all, I asked myself, but I soon put the query out of my head, because I did not want to dull the vivid image of the girl's beautiful figure which had been revealed to me. Was anyone else as lovely? I asked myself. Her feet were like baby feet. The marks of sex in her figure were so slight that they merely accentuated the beauty of the slim round outlines. What provocation in the crooked girlish arms, what a challenge in the inscrutable mutinous eyes. She had been delightful to me in the sea: had turned to me familiarly for help; I had touched her firm flesh again and again, and I was intoxicated with her as with wine.

I did not see Daisy again that morning until lunchtime, or dinner as we called it. I had fished persistently and called out loudly whenever I had the opportunity, hoping that it would bring her on deck, for she revelled in fishing, and was easily the champion because all the men vied with each other in picking the most attractive baits for her.

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In this game Crawford was easily first. He brought up a piece of red flannel one day, cut into the shape of a narrow tongue; on the other side of it he had sewn a glittering piece of white satin. Equipped with this bait no one had a chance with Daisy. She had caught three fish to my one, and as Donkin or Crawford was always at hand to pull up the wet line for her and take the hook from the fish and put the bait straight again she had little to do except amuse herself.

At lunch she took all my compliments in complete silence.

"You would be able to float," I insisted, "if you would arch your back and keep your head right back."

But she would not have it.

"I do arch my back and put my head right back, but my feet pull me upright."

"Such tiny feet," I replied, "have not the power to pull anyone down."

"You shall try, to-morrow," she said. "I will keep as rigid as you please, and you shall put your hand under my back to see whether I am stiff."

Winterstein suddenly spoke:

"Why don't you put that French thing on, that knitted thing instead of the tunic?"

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"Do you mean the *maillot*?" she said slowly, looking him straight in the eyes.

He nodded. His expression I remembered afterward was a little strained.

"I have not worn it," she said with her eyes on the cloth, "since I bathed at the Cliff House, but as you wish it," she added slowly, "I will put it on," and she turned away indifferently. There was a tension in the air, but not on her side I thought as much as on his, but why?

"What is the *maillot* like?" I said, showing her that I knew the French word.

"It's a knitted thing," she said; "all the girls used to wear them and little French slippers. You know we have parties in the baths. I have got all the things still. I'll put them on to-morrow. I think they suit me. Some people used to say so," she added slowly.

Winterstein got up, and went into his wife's bedroom for something or other. When he returned I was leaving the cabin. Daisy called to me on the way up that she would bring Browning with her. She was sensitive to beauty of words or music and extraordinarily intelligent: I delighted to read her my favorite poems.

If I were a story-teller I'd try to make all you

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people feel what we felt next morning. The weather was perfect, the sea like glass: the little schooner seemed to breathe gently as if sleeping on the oily swell. Rose came on deck early and established herself under the awning. I thought that her presence would make a difference, would act as a restraint on her sister and I wished her away. I had got my bathing things in some sort of order the evening before. I rather fancied myself in them. I had not been on deck more than five minutes when I noticed a sort of subdued excitement in everyone. All the men were on deck and they had all rigged themselves out more or less. Donkin was shaved and so was Crawford, Dyer limped about in clean ducks, and Abraham Lincoln had mounted a large white collar with a scarlet and blue tie. Winterstein alone had made no change. He talked to his wife while moving about whistling for wind as if indifferent. . . .

For the first time I noticed clearly that Rose was to become a mother. Her face was a little white and drawn, and when she tried once or twice to take a few turns with Winterstein you could see that her figure had altered in spite of the loose dress she wore. I was looking over the little lifeboat

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which we carried on the davit amidship when I heard Daisy's voice.

"What a perfect day," she said, "and how delightful everything looks. I know I shall enjoy the bath."

Naturally I went toward her. She was standing close to the companion. Rose was sitting a yard or so behind it with her chair against the mahogany top. Everyone was on the tiptoe of excitement. Donkin, Crawford, Abraham Lincoln, all moved like steel nibs toward the magnet, except Winterstein. The girl had her back to the men. Suddenly she opened her wrap a little to show herself in her *maillot* to her sister. Winterstein and I could not help seeing her as well. It caught my breath. For one moment I thought she was naked. The *maillot* was white; the meshes of it showed the rose-colored skin beneath. She looked like an ivory statue by some modern French artist: she was rounder, more woman-like than I had pictured her immaturity.

"Oh, Daisy," cried Rose.

"He told me to put it on," said Daisy defiantly looking at Winterstein while drawing the cloak about her again. "You used to say it fitted me perfectly," she added, "and liked me in it."

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"Yes," said Rose, amiably, leaning back and closing her eyes, as if in pain or weariness, "it does suit you, but somehow or other it was different when half a dozen of you children were all wearing them in the bath; besides you've grown, I suppose, and it's in the open and men about . . ."

"I'll take it off," said Daisy in the hard clear voice which I had come to recognize as a sign of annoyance.

"Oh, no," said Rose, "I'd bathe in it now I had it on. Go on," she said smiling, "the dip will do you good."

The girl turned and without a word went down into the cabin. In a minute or two she reappeared.

"Will you go down first," she said to me, "and I will dive in."

She stood in the gangway with the shapeless wrap about her. I nodded, for my mouth was dry, and without more ado, threw myself into the sea, and in a moment was standing on the sail dashing the water from my eyes. Daisy opened the wrap slowly and took her arms out of the sleeve with a sort of serpentine movement, infinitely graceful and provocative. She had put on her little tunic over the *maillot*. I was glad the outline was draped; but having seen her in the *maillot* the vision of her form was

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still with me in its half-ripe seduction. But being hidden from the other men it seemed mine and private. Yet I noticed that Donkin received her bathing cloak mechanically without taking his eyes off her. As she stood above me she swayed backward, threw her hands above her head, then bent gradually forward—down, down, the lines of her flexible young body changing every moment and let herself glide into the sea. All the time she stood poised on the deck there was a steel band of hate round my chest. I do not think the girl knew what she was doing. I do not believe she could have imagined the rage of desire her beauty called to life in these men who had been a month at sea, eating heartily while breathing in the tonic sea air. As soon as she was in the water beside me all anger vanished; she seemed to belong to me then, and I wondered whether she liked me to touch her; at any rate she was not adverse to learning anything I suggested and naturally I was fertile in suggestions.

Suddenly she said she would float; she would arch her back and put her head back as far as she could, and I must put my hand under her waist and support her, then I would see how impossible it was for her to float. I did what I was told with-

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out thinking, and at first she floated and I looked into her face and cried:

"You see, you see." But she was not looking at me, her face was set hard, there was a sort of defiance in it. I followed her glance up and saw Winterstein leaning over the bulwarks gazing down on her. I seemed to catch for the moment a sort of tension between them and then slowly the vase-like outlines of her hips sank lower and lower into the water, and she came upright smiling:

"See how my feet drag me down," she said, pushing her right foot up through the water in comic dismay, as if to show me how heavy it was.

Winterstein had left the bulwarks, but Donkin was looking down at her and Crawford and the others all drinking her in with greedy eyes. She swam about a little and then climbed up the ladder and stood at the top of it, half in the hot sunshine, and half in the shade of the awning—to get warm, she said. My foot was on the lower rung of the ladder, I was so close to her that I could see every line of her body, the adorable roundnesses, and the fine nervous grace of it. I could scarcely refrain from putting my hands on her as she stood there swaying just in front of me, with the wet tunic

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clinging to her like skin and showing all her adorable nudities.

"It is too delicious," she said with a little shudder, "the water is warmer than the air. The air makes me shiver, but the water is warm like new milk. You should come and bathe, too, Rose."

"Put on your wrap and change quickly, or you'll catch cold," said Rose, who had picked up her things and was going down to the cabin. She spoke a little tartly, I thought.

The girl turned and let Donkin wrap the bathing cloak about her without a word. I caught sight of her as she turned, and the vision of her is with me still. I've wondered since if there ever was a more perfect figure, or if anyone else could be so slim, with such tiny round breasts no larger than apples. I can still see the dimples in her arms at the elbow and the drips of water diamonding the rosy skin as she lifted up her arms to take the cloak which Donkin was holding.

The next moment she had vanished down the companion. I stepped forward. Donkin and Crawford were standing close together still staring after the girl. As she disappeared they turned and perhaps by accident jostled each other: in a flash their jealous hate flamed. Before one could think

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Donkin was holding Crawford by the throat while Crawford was striking him on the face savagely. The next moment Winterstein had thrust them apart.

“Are you mad?” he said to Donkin in repressed low voice. “I’m ashamed of you,” he added, turning to Crawford and speaking more naturally. Donkin glowered sullenly while Crawford muttered something and went forward. As I followed him Lincoln’s black face went down the forehatchway and Dyer turned to take up his watch again; but not before I had noticed a certain antagonism on every face; they all reminded me of a set of dogs on the point of fighting—all rigid, with bared fangs and hating eyes.

The rest of the day passed in a sort of stupor, Rose was on deck nearly the whole time, Winterstein always in attendance. Daisy and I walked the deck a good while together; I got her to say she liked me, but when I pressed her to say how much, she only laughed and changed the subject. She had a long talk with Donkin and another talk with Crawford; she even managed to smile at Dyer and transport him into the seventh heaven of delight. For the first time I began to realize her insatiate vanity; she wanted all the men to admire her. I raged

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against her in my heart, raged the more because I was in the toils. I would have given ten years of my life to have been able to have taken that slight figure in my arms, to have crushed those little breasts against mine and kissed the flower of her mouth.

But of all this she seemed unconscious, she was simply herself, quiet, aloof, and inscrutable till late in the afternoon, when a little breeze sprang up, a land breeze which gave the light schooner three or four knots an hour—good steering way. Then she had the lines up and fished from the poop. Donkin and myself waited on her, while Winterstein walked up and down beside his wife from the poop to the companion and from the companion to the poop in silence. Dyer steered and Abraham Lincoln came grinning to us every now and then to bring fresh bait for Missy Daisy. . . .

* * * * *

The catastrophe came with startling suddenness. I see now that it must have come, that it was all prepared, inevitable. Yet the unexpectedness of it and the tragic completeness were overwhelming. It seems to have blotted out all that went before so that I do not know whether it was two or three days or half a dozen days later than the bathing

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or not. Anyhow the bathing I have described was the last. For some days after we had lively breezes; the spar had to be taken in and the extemporized bath dismantled. We had called, I remember, at Mulege near Los Coyotes, and had had a good haul of pearls and a lot of hard work.

One afternoon we had been working hard and had had to row the boat for four or five miles over shallow water to a village where the inhabitants, we found, had collected pearls for years and years and had never before been visited. The bargaining was interminable. The fisher-folk had no standard of value. One man wanted a dollar for three or four fine pearls, another wanted fifty dollars for an insignificant bad specimen, and we were on the strain all day persuading and cajoling. I was tuckered out when I got into the boat and took the bow oar to Donkin's stroke while Winterstein sat in the stern sheets. I think Winterstein, too, must have been tired and exasperated, for he scarcely spoke all the way to the schooner.

When we got on board a six-knot breeze was blowing. After telling us to keep our course, Winterstein went below. I went down, too, and had a sleep: when I came up again I felt refreshed and vigorous.

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The night was wonderfully beautiful. The moon rose like a crimson wafer through a thin heat mist, but soon shook herself clear of her trailing garments and walked the purple like a queen. I noticed for the first time that the moon's radiance lent the edges of the nearer clouds a brownish smoky rose tinge. As the night wore on the fleecy round clouds gathered closer together like silver shields hanging heavily against the blue vault; the moonlight grew fitful.

When I went down Daisy and Winterstein were both on deck. They were standing near each other just by the poop. When I came up after having had a cup of coffee and a biscuit they were still talking at intervals. She was sitting on the companion while he stood in front of her or moved away and then came back. I went forward to do something and when I returned they were still talking, which seemed strange to me, for they seldom exchanged more than a word or two. Every now and then she laughed, and the laugh was hard and clear: she was scornful I thought. They seemed so preoccupied that I was annoyed and would not join them. Abraham Lincoln at the tiller was almost out of earshot. I suppose I was jealous. I noticed that when the moon came out from the

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darkening clouds they were some distance apart, but as soon as the light was veiled they seemed close together again. I was furious, my pride prevented me going near them, yet I could not but stare toward them at intervals, jealously watchful. Suddenly while I was a little to windward, just in line with the helmsman, the moon came out, and I saw Winterstein take Daisy's head quickly in his hands and kiss her on the lips; my heart stopped. The moon showed everything as if it were daylight. I took a quick step forward when just as suddenly I became aware that Rose had come out of the companion and had seen her husband kissing her sister.

For a moment she stood petrified. I heard a faint exclamation, or was it merely her breath caught in a gasp and strangled? She turned and moved across the deck with her hand across her face. She struck the low bulwark and there was a splash in the water. The next moment Winterstein had sprung to the side and plunged in after her. The second splash seemed only a couple of seconds behind the first. I jumped to the helm only just in time; for the darky had let it slip from his hands and was staring round where Winterstein had disappeared. I crammed the tiller hard down, shouting:

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“Man overboard, man overboard.”

The next moment Crawford sprang on deck. The little schooner was fluttering in the wind; she came about with a jerk just as Crawford and the darky dropped over the side into the dingy and began rowing back.

“What is it?” cried Donkin, running aft.

“Mrs. Winterstein fell overboard and Winterstein went after her. How long shall we take to get back, do you think?”

“In a quarter of a mile,” he replied, while loosening a life-buoy.

“Then we must pick them up?” I said.

“Of course,” he answered. “I guess Winterstein’s a good swimmer.”

“First rate,” I replied, but my heart was hurting with fear.

At this moment Daisy passed across my line of vision going to the bulwarks to look ahead. The moon was full out and the light quite strong again. I looked at her face and it seemed as if she were excited, expectant, resolute; no trace of horror, or fear. I gasped and suspicion came to me. Could it be that she had wished for it? Her sister—it was impossible.

Two minutes more and we were alongside the

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boat again. Crawford had everything ready as usual and had gone to the very spot, and as we came up in the wind beside the boat I left the helm to the nigger and leaned over the bulwarks. I was just in time to see Winterstein come to the surface and haul himself up by the stern of the boat.

He stood there poised for a moment, and then hurled himself into the sea again as if he would go to the very bottom. My heart sank: he had not found her yet.

I called to Crawford to know if he had seen any trace of Rose.

"No sign," he replied, "and this is the skipper's fourth or fifth dive. I guess it's no good."

"I think you ought to come into the boat," he said a moment later, "and get Winterstein to come on board. He'll kill himself with this diving. I've never known a man keep down so long; he can't do it again."

I jumped into the boat, and a couple of strokes took us to the spot where Winterstein had disappeared. We stared down at the dark surface, but there was not a sign or a sound. It seemed incredible that any man should be able to stay under so long.

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Suddenly Crawford cried, "There he is," and gave a couple of quick strokes with his oar: slowly the body came to the surface. As we caught hold of him we saw that the blood was streaming from his nose and mouth and ears.

"He's killed himself," said Crawford, "I thought he would."

We got back to the schooner in a moment and lifted Winterstein on board.

As I was helping to carry him toward the companion with his head in my hands, Daisy caught hold of me:

"Dead?" she cried, her eyes wild in the frozen face.

"I don't think so," I replied, "he stayed under too long. We must get him downstairs and bring him to."

"Ah," she gasped, and let my arm go.

We carried Winterstein down to the cabin, turned him over and poured the water out of him. Afterwards I blew whisky up his nose and poured some down his throat, and in a few minutes he revived.

"Where is she?" he said, struggling to rise. "Have you got her?"

"It's no good, Skipper," cried Crawford, holding him down. "We did our best. You did all one

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man could. She must have gone straight down. There's not a sign of her."

"I must find her," he said, struggling up. But he was too weak, he fell back fainting.

I do not know how the hours passed. I felt dazed; but with an ache at my heart and a sort of vague dread it was all incredible to me. I could not believe that Rose was dead, drowned, that I should never see her again, that charming woman with her appealing, affectionate soul. It was too awful to realize. I thought I'd wake up and find it all a bad dream. Suddenly I noticed that my legs were cold. I put my hand down, my trousers were dripping wet from carrying Winterstein. The next moment I became conscious that I was dead tired, drunk tired, my eyes were closing of themselves. Instinctively I turned into the for'castle, stretched myself on the lockers and slept. . . .

When I awoke I did not know where I was: everything was strange to me. Then I remembered, and with the remembrance came the iron band about my chest constricting my heart. I got up and went on deck. No change there. The schooner was just drawing through the water, the sun shining; the light dancing on the wavelets; the air like wine. Dyer was at the helm. If only last

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night could have been blotted out? I could scarcely believe it was real. As I went aft, Crawford met me:

"How's Winterstein?" I asked.

"Sleeping now," he replied, "but he's been mighty bad. I never saw a man so done up—never. How did it happen? How did his wife go overboard? You saw it," and his eyes probed mine.

"She came out of the companion," I said, "the deck was on a bit of a slant . . . it all happened so quickly." I felt myself flushing. I was angry with my hesitation.

"But why did she? How did she sink like that?—it's mighty curious," he added suspiciously.

"Have you seen Miss Daisy?" I asked to change the current of his thought.

"Miss Daisy," he repeated, emphasising the Miss, so that I noticed how strange it was for me to use the formal courtesy, "Miss Daisy ain't been up yet. The nigger thinks 'twas jealousy between the two sisters; but he saw nothing. You must have seen."

I had had time to recover myself, and choose a better way of putting him off the scent:

"It's awful, awful," I said, as if to myself. "I

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can't understand it." Crawford grunted, still suspicious.

But in spite of the tragedy, the suspicions, and the dark cloud of fear that hung over me as to what might happen next, the ordinary routine of life went on—luckily for all of us. A little later Abe called to me from the for'castle to come and have a cup of coffee. I found I was very hungry and after breakfast felt much better, more hopeful I mean and fitter to meet whatever might occur.

Half an hour later, Crawford was at the helm steering. I was standing near the foremast when suddenly Daisy came out of the companion and spoke to Crawford in passing. He replied in a monosyllable, without the usual greeting, and then stared up at the mainsail as if there was nothing more to be said. The instinctive puritanism of the race spoke in his awkward rude rebuff. I saw the color flood her cheeks and then ebb away. I loathed the man; I could have beaten him for his insolence; yet I was glad he had insulted her: why? She deserved it all and more, I thought hotly—and yet—she walked up the slanting deck, her little figure thrown back proudly. I crossed to windward between the masts to cut her off: why? I don't know. I only know that passion was in me;

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she seemed so far away from us all with that level, unseeing, unwavering glance; the proud aloofness attracted me. I had never before understood the fascination of her personality, of her courage. When we met she stopped and her eyes held me.

"I know you never meant it, Daisy," I said lamely and held out both my hands to her.

"Are you sure?" she replied, her eyes searching hard. The words shocked me. I did not realize that having just been insulted, she was all mistrust and temper; if only I had said the right word; but her pride angered me and for the moment I took her question that may have only been doubt of me for an admission of guilt. Fool that I was.

"God," I exclaimed violently and stepped back. Her face hardened and she swept past me without another word or look, leaving me there confused, angry, wild, and back of all full of forgiveness—of admiration.

I could not but dread the first meeting with Winterstein. What would he say, how would he take it all? I had not much time to let imagination wander. As I turned in my walk, he was there. His appearance was shocking; it wasn't only that he was white and seemed ill; his clothes hung on him; he was shrunken and his eyes were bad to

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look upon—despairing—sad at one moment, the next hot in self-anger and exasperation.

I went to him at once, my heart full of pity. I saw he was all broken.

“I’m glad you’re up,” I cried cordially; “the air’ll do you good.”

He looked at me with such dumb misery in the glance that my eyes pricked: he nodded his head once or twice and then went over to the low poop and sat down.

A little later Dyer went to him and said breakfast was ready. He shook his head merely and sat on gazing moodily at the water.

The same thing happened at dinner-time, but when pressed to eat by Crawford he replied, “’twould choke me. I’m all right.”

The sweet old routine of life had done me good so I thought it would do good to everyone and should be kept up; accordingly I went to dinner in the cabin as usual. As Daisy did not appear I knocked at the stateroom door and asked her to come. A minute or so later she entered quietly, but she hardly ate anything and spoke not at all. At supper it was the same thing.

Winterstein sat on the poop till far into the night. When Crawford came on watch, I took

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Winterstein below: he said merely, "I shan't sleep," but threw himself on the cabin sofa without undressing.

The next day passed in the same way, but before dinner Crawford told me that he could not get Winterstein to take anything.

"If he doesn't eat, he'll go crazy," he said. "He's just eatin' himself."

I told this to Daisy. She looked at me with set face.

"I have no influence," she said slowly, as if speaking to herself, "no influence, but I'll try." Her face went rigid as she spoke. I nodded and went with her up the companion ladder. But Winterstein didn't yield at first to her asking; he shook his head, merely saying, "I can't."

"The soup will help you," she said, and then slowly, "Rose would wish you to take it!"

"O, God!" he cried starting up and stretching out his arms, as if he couldn't bear to hear the name—and then sank down again. She put the cup in his hands and he took it and drank, and then relapsed again into his moody brooding silence.

When she returned she went straight to her cabin and so another day went by.

The next day Winterstein took some soup I

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brought him. In the evening Crawford proposed to return at once to 'Frisco.

"I don't like his looks," he said; "he's worrying himself crazy and I guess the sooner we all get away from each other the better; perhaps we'll be able to forget the whole derved thing then and live again."

Donkin agreed with him, and so did I and the ship's course was altered.

Daisy got into the way of walking the deck with Donkin. He adored the very planks she trod on and perhaps that touched her. Anyway, she was with him now more than with any of us. It made me angry and scornful, kept my jealousy alive, prevented me from understanding her or forgiving—I always saw the two heads together and the fatal kiss.

* * * * *

In this puzzling world mistakes or blunders often have worse results than crimes. The momentary yielding to passion brought the tragedy and the first tragedy inevitably drew on another.

We had got into the Equatorial Current and were making fine time up the coast towards 'Frisco. The weather was just what sailors like: a fair wind perfectly steady day after day; bright skies, and blue

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seas with scarcely a white horse to be seen. We did not alter the set of the canvas for days together: there was nothing for us to do unfortunately. Unfortunately nothing to take our minds off the tragedy, nothing to change the feeling of misery and apprehension. I never passed such miserable days: they seem like a nightmare to me still.

One morning I heard a row on deck and then what sounded like a shot. I threw a coat on and ran quickly up the companion. To my astonishment there was no one steering, the helm was lashed amidship. I heard a shout from overhead and saw Donkin and Crawford in the main-rigging near the heel of the top-mast. The next moment I noticed Winterstein seated on deck between the two masts. He was playing with a dead snapper making believe that it was about to bite him, drawing his hand away quickly from the dead mouth with a cackle of amusement.

"Good God!" I wondered, "what's the matter?" As I went toward him, it suddenly came to me: "He's mad," I said to myself. I was all broken up with pity.

The men in the rigging shouted, "Look out," just in time to put me on my guard: for Winterstein had a revolver beside him, and as soon as I came within

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his line of vision he took up the gun and leveled it at me crying:

"There's another of 'em," and fired without more ado.

I called out to him and backed away, but as he was preparing to fire again, I slid across the deck to the lee rigging and went up as fast as I could. Neither Donkin nor Crawford had anything new to tell me, except that Crawford had been slightly wounded by the first shot Winterstein had fired at him. It had just touched the right shoulder.

"It burns a bit," he said, "though it's not much more than skin deep."

The nigger and Dyer, it appeared, had both fled to the for'castle. We quickly resolved that the moment Winterstein went down below, one of us should seize him and the others tie him up.

"If I could only get him away from his gun," said Donkin, "I'd find out in five minutes whether he's as strong as he thinks himself."

"You'll find out how strong he is soon enough," I replied. He's about the best man with his hands I ever saw. It will be all the three of us can do to get the better of him."

"I've never seen the man yet," said Donkin sturdily, "I was afraid of."

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The trial came very soon. Of a sudden Winterstein stood up, threw the dogfish overboard and leaving his revolver on deck walked quickly aft, and disappeared down the companion. The next moment we slid down to the deck, Crawford armed himself with an iron belaying pin, a fearsome club at close quarters. I crept stealthily along the weather bulwarks to the companion and Donkin strode boldly down the deck. I think it must have been Donkin's heavy step that Winterstein heard; for just before I got to the companion he passed up it like a flash and stood facing him.

"Ho! Ho!" he cried, laughing, "Mr. Donkin wants some gruel, does he? Take it, take it then," and jumping in as lightly as a ballet dancer, he struck out right and left. His left caught Donkin in the face and the blood spurted as if the man had been hit with a hammer, the second blow caught him on the neck and hurled him down.

"Ho! Ho!" cried the madman again, dancing about so as to face Crawford.

"Crawford want some, too."

Fortunately for Crawford, Donkin was a very strong man, and scarcely had he been knocked down when he picked himself up again. He was angry, too, and his anger did him no good. With his

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head down like a bull he rushed at the skipper. Winterstein side-stepped him to windward and as he passed caught him a left-handed shot under the ear with such force that Donkin seemed to touch nothing till he crashed into the lee bulwarks and lay there quiet enough. My chance had come: Winterstein was within a yard of me. As he struck Donkin I threw my arms about his waist from behind, pinning his right arm to his side. At the same time with the instinct of the wrestler I lifted him from the deck so as to make him as helpless as possible. For a moment he struggled wildly, roaring like a bull; then in a second broke my grip and got his right hand free. But I still held him and as I was well behind him he could not get at me easily. But he was too strong. The next moment his right hand had caught my collar and shifted to my neck and ear, and I felt myself being dragged round. I knew that the struggle could only last a second or two, and just as I was expecting his blow I heard a thud; the writhing form in my arms grew still and heavy and slid down on the deck. Crawford had run across and struck Winterstein on the temple with the iron belaying pin. Almost at the same moment Dyer and Abraham Lincoln ran up on deck. We hauled Donkin up out of the

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lee scuppers and told Dyer to throw water over him. We then wiped Winterstein's bleeding head and carried him down below to his berth, where we tied his hands and feet. Just after we had laid him out, Daisy came out of her little stateroom. She looked at us and in a phrase or two Crawford flung the tragedy at her. She did not seem to notice the man. She came straight to Winterstein.

"Leave him to me," she said, imperiously, kneeling down beside him.

* * * * *

The second tragedy seemed to fall on numbed senses. I scarcely remember any sequence of time in what occurred afterward. I knew it soon came on to blow, but whether it was that day or the next or later, I could not tell. I remember that Winterstein appeared on deck again and sat in his old place on the poop gazing out over the sea. His madness seemed to have left him, but his brooding silence now was often broken by periods during which he moved about muttering to himself incessantly. Crawford said he was talking of his wife or to her. He was tragic, terrible—a figure of despair.

* * * * *

We had altered our course again and were steer-

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ing Nor'west. The Nor'east wind had grown to a gale, while the current was running strong under our feet. Between the tide and the wind the sea grew into hillocks and hills and still it blew harder and harder. . . .

Long ago we had taken all the sails off her, leaving only a storm jib and a rag of tarpaulin in the mainmast rigging aft, and under these two handkerchiefs the schooner lay over so that her masts were near the water.

Late in the afternoon Crawford asked me to keep a sharp lookout.

"'Frisco?" I asked, and he nodded.

I never was so glad of anything in my life, the band round my chest seemed to loosen.

The sun was going down in a sort of yellow glare. For over an hour or so Winterstein had been standing by the tarpaulin in the mainmast rigging staring over the waste of water. I clawed my way aft to him. The tarpaulin sheltered us from the fury of the wind and made an oasis of quiet in the uproar.

"We'll soon be in 'Frisco!" I cried.

He looked at me with unseeing hopeless eyes: my heart turned to water. Suddenly he caught me by the shoulder.

"I can't stand it," he said, as if confiding to me;

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but in a tone so low I could hardly hear him. "I can't stand it."

"Time will soften the pain," I said. The words rang false even to me.

"No, no," he shook his head. "It gets worse. If it had been an accident, I might have stood it: if some one else had done it, perhaps; but I did it, I: that's the thorn that festers and stings and burns, and gets worse not better, worse all the time. . . . I was glad to go mad: I wish I could go mad again and not think of it all the time." And he passed his hand over his forehead in weary wretchedness. . . .

"If I hadn't loved her so I might sleep now and then and forget. I never cared for any other woman: she was perfect to me from the beginning. Hell," he broke off raging, "what sort of a fool was I—eh? was there ever such a fool—a damned fool—damned. . . .

"I don't know why I did it: it just took me at the moment. Hell," and his eyes were wild. "I'm not fit to live: this world's no place for fools," and he laughed mirthlessly. . . .

"I can't stand it, I just can't stand it! Oh, my sweet: fancy hurting you! . . .

"Is there any other life, eh?" I could not an-

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swer—my heart ached for him. "I never took much stock in it; but I'll soon know. So long," and he turned into the force of the wind and strode aft. Even then I noticed that he could walk the deck in the gale that seemed to blow my breath down my throat and choke me.

I clawed my way forward again. Winterstein was beyond my help. I was glad of the gale and the wild seas and the danger. I didn't want to think. I was filled with fear and pain. . . .

The wind came harder and harder. The tremendous weight of it seemed to flatten the sea, and you could only put your head above the bulwarks if you held on with both hands.

All that night Crawford stuck to the helm and it needed all his seamanship to bring us through the storm.

At twelve o'clock we lifted the light and a little later we got a little under the shelter of the land and the sea was not so bad. But the bar gave us an awful half hour. The little schooner came out of the broken water with decks swept clean: the boat had gone and all the bulwarks, and *The Rose* was leaking in a dozen places: she would never go to sea again.

When we came to anchor off Meiggs's wharf

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about three o'clock we had all had enough of it. In spite of the fear that the schooner might founder under us and though I was frozen cold and wet, I went below and slept without turning in. I had not had a wink for two nights and had eaten nothing but a biscuit for thirty-six hours.

Crawford woke me, bright sunshine fell down the hatchway: as soon as I opened my eyes, I knew something was wrong.

"What is it?" I cried.

"Winterstein went overboard in the night," he said, "I don't know when, and the girl's been in faint after faint. Donkin's going to take her up to the house. I guess you had better get up, she may want to see you. But don't say anything harsh to her: she's had it bad enough. . . ."

I was on deck in five minutes in time to see Donkin bring Daisy out of the companion and take her across to the ladder. He fairly lifted her into the boat, and as he turned to row her ashore I caught a glimpse of her face. It made me gasp: I never saw such a change, never. Her face had gone quite small like a little child's, and as white as if it had been made out of snow. . . .

I could not stop on board the schooner; I guess

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everybody left it as soon as he could. I came East the same week and never saw any of 'em again.

* * * * *

A pretty bad story, ain't it? A brute of a story. Just like life. No meaning in it: the punishment out of all proportion to the sin. Sometimes it's like that. Sometimes things a thousand times worse go unpunished and then for a little mistake or slip, tragedy piles itself on tragedy. There ain't no meaning in it, no sense. I don't believe there's any purpose either, anywhere: it's just chance.

The judge broke out.

The dreadful story had held us; now some of the men stretched themselves, lit cigars, or took drinks, but no one spoke for quite a while.

Suddenly Charlie Railton said:

"That Daisy was a wild piece, sure; but I thought you were going to tell us something about Mrs. Amory, Judge. I thought perhaps you knew her."

"I knew a good deal about her," replied Barnett quietly, "though I never met her. I was mixed up in her affairs after her husband died. I was agent for the land she bought for almshouses. I let her have it cheaper because of the object."

"I ought to have met her a dozen times, but I never did, strange to say. Of course I knew all

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about her for the last two or three years. I knew she was a mighty good woman. Her lawyer, Hutchins, whom I knew well, always said so, said she was the best woman he ever saw, and one of the kindest. Amory just worshiped her, I believe, and she brought up his daughters by his first wife splendidly. She had only one child of her own and it died. It nearly killed her, Hutchins said. A mighty good woman, and I ought to have met her a dozen times, but it never happened so. . . .

“When she died Hutchins insisted that I should go to the funeral. You know the house. I guess it’s one of the finest in the States. They laid her out in the music-room. It looks like a church with its high painted windows and old tapestries and open timber roof: the paintings are all masterpieces: three or four Rembrandts, I believe. Well, they did the room up as a *chapelle ardente*—and laid her out there in state, and all Philadelphia went to visit her and a good many of her girls cried over her. I went with Hutchins and nothing would do but he would have me go right up to the coffin. The moment I looked at her, the moment I saw her face, the little face no bigger than your hand, all frozen white; I knew her. That was the face I had seen in the boat when Donkin rowed her ashore

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thirty years before, "Jezebel's daughter," I used to call her to myself. . . .

"I was just struck dumb, but I knew that was why I had never met her. She had not wanted to meet me. I was not a bit surprised when two or three days later I had a letter from her. Hutchins had to read the will and in it he found a letter addressed to me. I have not got it by me, but I can tell you some of what was in it; she had no reason to be ashamed of it. I was wrong to judge her as I did at the time. Young people are mighty severe in their judgments. As you get older you get more tolerant. . . .

"With the letter there was a little box, and in the box a string of black pearls, the same I had given her sister. Mrs. Amory began by telling me that she had wanted to give them back to me, as soon as Donkin had told her they were mine, but all trace of me had been lost, and she had never heard of me again till long after her husband's death, when the end was near. She asked me to give the black pearls to my eldest daughter Kate, and she left me a string of white ones to give to my youngest daughter. She seemed to know all about us. . . . She told me I had always misjudged her and I guess I had. . . .

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“Winterstein, it appeared, knew her first; used to meet her at the baths and swim with her and make up to her. She thought he was in love with her, and girl-like gave him her soul; made him her god. Just before she went back to school she brought him home and introduced him to her sister, thinking that through her sister she would keep in touch with him. She heard no more till her sister told her they were married. She said it drove her nearly crazy. . . .

“I guess Rose never knew that Daisy loved him, but it was a bad tangle. Daisy did not say that Rose knew, but she said Rose ought to have known—anybody would have known. I think she was wrong. She was judging Rose by herself; she was mighty quick and observant while Rose just lived like a flower. Besides Rose would never have wanted her on board the schooner if she had even suspected the truth. No; Rose acted in all innocence. But Daisy couldn't see that; she was hurt too badly to judge fairly.

“She did not excuse herself in the letter. She confessed it was her wounded vanity led her to provoke Winterstein. But she had no notion of anything worse. ‘I saw he admired me,’ she said, ‘and that pleased me. I was hard and reckless; I felt

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hurt and cheated: he was mine and I could have made a great man of him, I thought. Oh, I was horribly to blame; but he caught my head that night, and kissed me against my will. I could not get away. If I had been standing up, his lips should never have touched me. You will believe me; won't you? and forgive me; now that I am dead? . . .'

"I forgave her all right," the Judge said, "or rather I understood her and there was nothing to forgive. There's Angel and Devil in all of us, Charlie, and the Heaven and Hell, too, is of our own making, it seems to me. . . ."

Isaac and Rebecca

Isaac and Rebecca

CHARACTERS

REBECCA ISAAC. *A brunette of seventeen, very pretty: small with regular features and brilliant coloring. David Isaac's daughter.*

DAVID ISAAC. *A Jew about sixty with high narrow forehead and soft, indecisive chin, gray hair and beard, a little bent.*

REUBEN LEVISON. *A banker, very rich. A little shorter than Isaac, inclined to be stout, bald. David Isaac's cousin.*

MRS. GOLDSCHMIDT. *An old woman attending David Isaac.*

Rebecca. So I can't get the dress. Oh, it's too bad. I've been working for a fortnight and have everything ready, and now I can't go to the dance. It's too bad. [*Stamps with rage.*]

Isaac. But vy not, tear; you can veer something else.

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Rebecca. I've nothing to wear. My clothes are too shocking. I never get a new frock—never.

Isaac. I'm sorry, tear; but I can't get six pounds in a moment.

Rebecca. A moment—a week, you mean; you said a week ago you'd try, try—h'm!

Isaac. And I did try, my tear, I did indeed, but I'm getting old and I can't sell de jewelry like I used and dey won't trust me now mit fine pieces, only cheap shtuff.

Rebecca. Oh, if I were a man, if only I were a man!

Isaac. Don't say dat, dear! Vot would you do? You are so pretty, like an ainchel, my little girl. [*He puts his hand caressingly on her shoulders.*] Everything vill come right mit a little patience.

Rebecca. Patience, that's what you always say, patience—I hate the word. . . . Why don't you see your cousin Reuben?

[*Isaac shrugs his shoulders despairingly and closes his eyes in token that nothing's to be hoped from that quarter: the girl goes on.*]

Why not take me to see him?

Isaac. Vot could you do? He's as old as me.

Rebecca. Oh, I don't know what I'd do: but I'd

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do anything rather than rot away in this hole like the others. I hate the Commercial Road and the flashy foreigners, leering and sneering. I love gentlemen like you see in the park on Sunday, quiet, dignified. . . . I hate common people and poverty. It's a crime to be poor—a crime.

Isaac. Oh, my tear, don't say dat: I've always worked hard, always. I thought honesty und vork would make me rich, but they didn't. I've always told my customers the truth, said what de tings cost or nearly: but de world likes to be cheated, likes to tink the false stones real——

Rebecca. And the false stones are real. Oh, if I were a man! I'd tell the women the rings would buy 'em sweethearts and money and happiness. I'd fool them as they want to be fooled. Why not? If you don't, some one else will and you'll get left, that's all, stranded, old, poor, despised; poor—it's the only crime!

Isaac. I was always too scrupulous, always too honorable, and now it's too late to begin all over again. Besides, nobody trusts me now, dey all know I'm poor. Dey used to tink I vos rich and a miser and dey vould give me anyting, now dey know, dey don't trust me no more, dey know I am honest and dey don't trust me.

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Rebecca. Why didn't you go to your cousin and make him take you into his bank? Not now, I mean, but when you first married.

Isaac. I went to him, but he said I vos a fool to marry a poor girl vidout a penny of *dot*, and Rachel ven she heard it vos angry and would not let me go near him even ven you vos born.

Rebecca. He doesn't know anything about me, does he? Nothing? You're sure? . . . Tell me about him? Is he big and strong and hard?

Isaac. He's smaller nor me, a little shtout, bald he vos too; but he has a vay vid 'im.

Rebecca. Is the bank large?

Isaac. Oh, a great place mid dozens of clerks and brass railings, and you hear ze money singing all day long—ah!

Rebecca [*clasping her hands*]. Oh, tell me all about it, all! I looked into a bank the other day; it was bare and cold, but dignified. Has he a room to himself? And a man outside the door to stop people going in?

Isaac. Yes, on the first floor. He is not near the clerks. All by himself upstairs in a great room, vid thick carpets and beautiful chairs vid green leather, real Chippendale chairs—beautiful. And dere is a room in which you vait, mit all de papers,

Isaac and Rebecca

papers in Cherman, French and English. And dere is anodder room mit a long table and blotting pads and seats all about. Oh, it is a great place!

Rebecca. But tell me about him? Is he married? What is his wife like? Has he any children? Tell me all about him.

Isaac. I don't know anything, my tear, I've never asked.

Rebecca. Never asked! Oh! Has he a motor? Is his chauffeur in livery? Have you seen a woman in it? Oh, if I had only seen the outside of it, I'd know if he was married or not. I'd know from the chauffeur, I'd know from the look of the carriage. Is it open or closed? Does it ever have flowers in it? Where do you keep your eyes?

Isaac. I've only seen it outside de door. I've never looked at it except to tink how fine it was and how big.

Rebecca. Is it big? How many seats inside?

Isaac. I don't know.

Rebecca. Oh, my goodness! My goodness! How shall I get away from all this? How shall I? Can't you take me to see him?

Isaac. How can I, my tear, how can I?

Rebecca. When is his birthday?

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Isaac. His birthday? Oh, soon, now, in July, the fift.

Rebecca. That's only a fortnight to wait and then you must take me. I should have a present for him. I'll ask Julia to embroider some handkerchiefs with his initials, and I'll say I did them.

Isaac [*admiringly*]. You clever girl!

Rebecca. Now you must go out every day, father, and tell lies about the jewelry. What does it matter? Get the girls to put it on. Tell them the rings make their hands look pretty, that a necklace makes them look rich, like fine ladies. Say anything to make me enough money for a new dress. I must have a new dress.

Isaac. I vill do my best, but——

Rebecca [*pouting*]. But, but, always but——

[*July: Isaac waiting. Rebecca dressed to go out.*]

Isaac. Vy, you've got your hair down. Oh, it is pretty. You do look pretty, but dat dress is tight. No? Vell, you know best. But you've powdered your face. Not? Vell, you know best. I like you as you vos every day. You look younger and older. I don't know vot. Vell, vell, you know best.

Isaac and Rebecca

Rebecca. My hair's down, of course, I'm fifteen, remember.

Isaac. He! he! Vot a girl it is! You are seventeen, Rebecca. You vos born on the Fourth of April, 1887. Dot's vy ve called you "Jubilee" for your second name, dot's vy.

Rebecca. My second name's Judith, and I was born in July, '90. I'm not fifteen yet.

Isaac. My tear, you are mistaken. You are seventeen years past, I'm sure.

Rebecca [*stamping*]. You stupid, stupid. I wonder mother could stand you. I'm fifteen, I tell you.

Isaac. Vell, vell, my dear. If you've made up your mind I'm sure you're right. You know best, just as your mother vos always right. Always a master-woman, a——

Rebecca. Oh, come along. You'd prose away there all day. [*After starting.*] What will you say to Uncle Reuben?

Isaac. Vy, vot you told me. Dot I vant him to know you, you are so pretty—vot?

Rebecca. What age is he exactly? What is he like?

Isaac. He's my first cousin. He must be over fifty. He's shtout and shtrong. He's only had to

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take care of himself all his life. His father vos rich. But vot vill you say to him?

Rebecca. I don't know till I see him. He's very rich, you say, a real millionaire? An English millionaire?

Isaac. My tear, he's rich enough for anyting. He has two or tree million. A house in Hampstead like a palace, and servants everywhere. He is *de* Reuben Levison—*de* great banker.

Rebecca. And you went to him when mother was ill and he would not help you. What did he say then?

Isaac. He said so I make my bed so I must lie on it, and tings like dat.

Rebecca. How can men be such brutes? If he had been poor with children of his own, I could understand it. But rich and without any one, I can't. He must be hard like stone and cruel.

Isaac. Oh, no, my tear. But the rich have to refuse to give at *de* beginning and *de* habit becomes second nature to dem. Besides, if dey didn't love money more dan anyting, dey'd never get rich, never.

Rebecca. Why didn't you get rich? Didn't mother want you to get rich? Didn't she spur you on?

Isaac and Rebecca

Isaac. She loved me, und ve vos happy. I vos too honest. I told de truth, not lies. But ven I tink of you, I am sorry. I solt more this week from lies, and it pleases everybody better. I told the girls dey all looked so sweet and beautiful, as you told me to. Dot's how I got you the dress, and it is pretty. But it's short, do you like it so short? You are very pretty in it.

Rebecca. I'm getting hot. I'll have to use my puff. Why couldn't we drive? Everything is against the poor—everything. . . . You must tell him I'm the prettiest girl in the Road and not fifteen yet.

Isaac. But vy so young, my tear, fifteen, it's a child.

Rebecca. Julia Hoppe said old men liked children. That's why, if you must know.

Isaac. How clever you are, my tear.

Rebecca. If you hated poverty like I do you'd be clever.

[*Reuben Levison's office.*]

[*Reuben is seated at a table. He looks at Isaac with the aversion of the rich man for the poor relation.*]

Reuben. What can I do for you, David, what do you want?

The Veils of Isis

Isaac. It's your birthday, Reuben, and I've brought my girl to see you.

Mr. Levison. Your girl? What do you mean? Your wife?

Isaac [hurriedly]. No, no, my wife's dead. I mean my little child. She's the prettiest girl in the Road—the prettiest in London, and so smart and clever, and she wants to see you, Reuben—her rich uncle!

Mr. Levison. But I don't want to see her, I've too much to do, and I can't waste time on children. I'm busy, you must tell her that.

Isaac [twisting his hands about]. Oh, Reuben, I can't, I can't, she'll be so disappointed at not seeing you. You can't refuse. She has worked your initials on some handkerchiefs, oh, so beautifully. She is the prettiest girl in all London, she is like a flower.

Mr. Levison. What's her name? What age is she?

Isaac [hurriedly]. Her name's Rebecca, she's—she's grown up.

Mr. Levison. All right, bring her in. I have no time to spare. I can only give her a moment or two. I thought perhaps you wanted to see me on some business.

Isaac and Rebecca

Isaac. Oh, I'll bring her, I'll bring her at vonce.
[*He hurries out of the room.*]

[*A moment or two after; Rebecca comes in alone. Reuben Levison looks at her, his sulky, annoyed air vanishes. He gets up as the girl comes toward him.*]

Mr. Levison. Take a chair, Miss Isaac, take a chair. [*Putting one ready for her.*] What can I do for you?

Rebecca [*smiling saucily*]. Tell me first that the uncle is not ashamed of his niece.

Mr. Levison [*a little embarrassed, laughs*]. Ashamed, indeed, who could be ashamed of so pretty a girl?

Rebecca [*pouting*]. Yet you've let all these years pass without caring to know anything about the pretty girl.

Mr. Levison. Now is that fair, Miss Rebecca? How did I know that Miss Isaac was so pretty? How could I guess? I thought you were a child.

Rebecca [*smiling*]. Well, I forgive you now. [*She produces the handkerchiefs.*] I've brought you something for your birthday. But perhaps Mrs. Levison won't like you to use them. You see

The Veils of Isis

I've worked your initials on them. [*She lays them on the desk.*]

Mr. Levison [*laughing*]. They're very pretty, and I'm very much obliged. Of course I'll use them. There's no Mrs. Levison—you see I've had no time to get married; now I'm too old, too ugly.

Rebecca. No, indeed you're not ugly. I won't have you slander yourself. And you don't look a bit old. I hate boys, they're no good. [*She throws him a long glance from under her eyelashes.*]

Mr. Levison. [*He gets up as if drawn by a magnet and stands over her.*] I wish I was young and handsome enough for you, Rebecca. May I call you Rebecca?

Rebecca. Of course you may. [*Seriously.*] I don't care for handsome men; they're always thinking of themselves. [*Looking up at him.*] You look strong and I love strength.

Mr. Levison. Oh, I'm strong enough, but I'm old, little girl. What age are you, Rebecca? You look half child, half woman.

Rebecca [*looking up at him*]. I'm fifteen, nearly.

Mr. Levison [*has laid his hands on her shoulder, but now draws them away quickly*]. Only fifteen, I say, that's too young. My God! I'd have thought you sixteen at least.

Isaac and Rebecca

[*He moves back from her, his face a little flushed.*]

Rebecca [*looking at him with eyes that drink him in*]. I said "nearly fifteen," but I may be nearer sixteen. [*Archly.*] Mayn't I? Don't you know that all women make themselves younger than they are. [*She smiles.*] Suppose I said I was sixteen past?

Mr. Levison. [*His face clears, and he steps nearer her, smiling. She rises.*] But are you? That's the point? [*He lifts her chin in his hand.*]

Rebecca [*burning her boats*]. Yes, I'm over sixteen.

Mr. Levison. Really?

Rebecca [*nods her head*]. I was born in '87, I'm a Jubilee girl. I'm just seventeen, you see, quite old already.

Mr. Levison. [*Grown bold again, he slips his arm round her shoulders.*] I think you're a witch, Rebecca, and know just what I am thinking of.

Rebecca [*looking up at him*]. What are you thinking of?

Mr. Levison. [*Their eyes meet.*] Of you, of course. I think you're one of the prettiest girls I've ever seen in my life.

Rebecca [*looking up at him again*]. But do you mean it?

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Mr. Levison [*drawing her to him*]. Of course I mean it, and clever, too, if all your father says is true. By the way [*he draws back again*] where is he?

Rebecca [*negligently*]. In the waiting-room, I suppose.

Mr. Levison. [*His eyes narrow cunningly.*] Why didn't he come in with you?

Rebecca [*her eyebrows lifted*]. I did not want him to come. Do you want him?

Mr. Levison [*suspiciously*]. Why does he wait?

Rebecca. To take me home again, I suppose: he brought me, you know.

Mr. Levison. Oh, I don't like that, you see I have my business to think of. People may want to see me at any time. I'm really very busy. I told your father so. [*Goes back to his desk.*]

Rebecca [*biting her lips*]. I'm sorry. Do you want me to go? I'm sorry.

Mr. Levison [*recalled to full self-possession*]. You see I'm busy, my dear Miss Isaac. I'm very busy and your father'll get tired waiting.

Rebecca. He's used to waiting for me. He's reading some old German paper, and has forgotten all about poor little Rebecca.

Mr. Levison [*seating himself resolutely at his*

Isaac and Rebecca

desk again and beginning to gather up some papers]. It was very kind of you to come, Miss Rebecca. A very agreeable surprise, but I don't like to keep Isaac waiting, and I'm really very busy this morning.

Rebecca. Well, good-bye, Uncle [*going toward him and holding out her hand, adding in a low, reproachful voice*]: You're not angry with me for coming, are you? I was so eager to meet the great Mr. Levison. But now I'm afraid you're angry with me.

Mr. Levison [*gets up and takes her hand*]. Oh, no, I'm not angry, Rebecca: you know I'm not angry. But—but I am really very busy, some other day, eh? You'll come again, eh? Another time—by yourself, eh?

[*Their eyes meet, and again he flushes while putting his other hand on hers. She casts her eyes down, turns and walks quietly to the door.*]

Mr. Levison. [*As she disappears he puffs out his breath.*] My God, she's pretty, a little devil, a little witch. But I did right. That old father's cunning. What did he want, waiting there? Down at heel, as usual. How much would he want? . . . Phew! I am hot. . . . Who would have thought

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such an old Cheap-Jack would have had such a daughter. I very nearly kissed her. If I had, would she have taken it? My God, I believe she would. What a sweet girl! But the father outside the door. Pouf, it makes you careful. . . . I wonder is she sixteen past or did she only say it to give me confidence. Oh, she must be sixteen or seventeen. She's perfectly formed, her legs and breasts, yes, seventeen she must be, a perfect little witch. . . . I wonder does she know what she's doing? Sometimes she has such a child-air, her eyes are liquid. Some girls are coquettes in the cradle. Whew! . . . I must have Rubie in. Shall I give orders not to let them in again? No, I won't. [*Rings bell on desk, the door opens at once. A sort of upper servant enters.*] Send Mr. Rubie to me, and I'm "not in" to Mr. Isaac any more, you understand? to Mr. Isaac; but if Miss Isaac calls, let her in.

Servant. Yes, sir.

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Isaac. Vot did he say, tear, vot did he say?

Rebecca. Why did you wait? Let us go.

Isaac. Was he nice? Did he—was he kind?

Rebecca [*in a hard voice*]. Let us go.

[*She goes out with her parasol ready to open, and*

Isaac and Rebecca

flashing bright smiles to every one she meets. Isaac trots behind, but when they get into the street he ranges up beside her.]

Isaac. Vot did he say, my tear? I am very anxious.

Rebecca [*looking at him with hard eyes*]. What was there to say? You were on the other side of the door. Why didn't you go away?

Isaac. Oh, my tear. I did whatever you wanted. I thought it best to be near you. If you had called out I would have come in at vonce.

[*Rebecca looks at him contemptuously.*]

Rebecca. Come in? What for? [*Puts her nose in the air.*]

Isaac [*with his irresponsible optimism tries again and again to engage her in conversation*]. Vot fine offices and vot nice servants! His man, dat man in black came in and spoke to me. He remembered me from years ago. Reuben's not married. I thought you would like to know. The man told me he lived alone at Hampstead [*Rebecca looks at him pityingly*] and he has two motors, one closed for the City, and an open one. Oh, he has got on tremendously. Lords come to him in his office und great people. [*Rebecca looks at him reflectively.*] Oh, I found out a lot.

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Rebecca. You did. What did you tell the man?

Isaac. I say where we live, and he ask me who you were; I say my daughter. I am proud of you, tear. I said I had brought you because you had wanted to come, that you had worked some handkerchiefs for your Uncle's birthday.

Rebecca [*looks at him*]. Why must you be a fool!

Isaac. Fool? Vy, he want to know, and I am proud of you, so proud, Rebecca.

Rebecca. Silly. I would ask everything and tell nothing. You chatter, chatter, chatter, so that everybody knows your business. That's why I say you're foolish. I'd tell nothing.

Isaac. But, Rebecca! why are you angry mit me? I can only do my best. [*Her face is resigned and a little weary.*] I do all I can for you. I do my best.

Rebecca [*looks at him and sums it all up dispassionately*]. Why don't you go away and leave me?

Isaac. I'm sorry I did not. I thought I would be a help to you.

Rebecca. Help! You can't help me; you can't even help yourself. You are what they call unlucky. [*She shrugs her shoulders.*]

Isaac [*drops his head*]. Dat's vot Rachel used to say, I vos unlucky, and perhaps I vos. But it's

Isaac and Rebecca

being too honest that has kept me down. To be honest and truthful one should be rich—I'm too good; the poor have no right to be honest. . . .

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A MONTH LATER

[*Rebecca comes into the room dressed for going out. Isaac looks at her.*]

Isaac. Vere did you get dat dress? How grown up you look! Oh, I like you in dat long dress best! It makes you look taller, and you've done your hair up, too. Vere are you going? Oh, you are pretty.

Rebecca [*looks at him quietly*]. I am going for a walk. I shall perhaps be out to dinner. Julia Hoppe may give me dinner.

Isaac. Oh, you're going mit Julia? Well, she is nice, but a little fast, my tear, isn't she? You will be careful?

Rebecca. It's better to be a little fast than slow these times. [*Drawing on a long glove as she speaks.*]

Isaac. Vot splendid gloves! You must have paid six or seven shilling for dem gloves? Vere are you going?

Rebecca [*sharply*]. Ask me no questions, I'll

The Veils of Isis

tell you no lies. I'm going to Julia Hoppe's if you must know.

Isaac. May I come? I don't like you valking about de streets alone.

Rebecca. You may come if you want to. But you had much better go out with the tray. It's stopped raining now, and this dress is not paid for yet.

Isaac. But would you like me to come?

Rebecca. I don't care, I think you had better make your round. I'm all right. Nothing'll happen to me. Nothing ever does happen in this dull hole. Now don't worry: I'll be back soon. Nobody'll run away with me. [*She goes out of the door.*] Worse luck!

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[*Mr. Levison seated in his room, Rebecca enters quickly.*]

Mr. Levison. How did you get in? Who let you in? Where's Lewis?

Rebecca [*with color in cheeks*]. Three questions in one breath: I walked in, simply. No, no! [*Coming close to him.*] I'll tell the truth. I waited till Lewis went to the lift with the gentleman who just came out, and then I slipped in. Are you glad to see me?

Isaac and Rebecca

Mr. Levison [*rises*]. I don't know. I'm glad, yes. Who could help being glad? But I'm afraid it's not wise. Where's your father?

Rebecca. I left him at home. [*Taking a seat.*] Did you wish to see him?

Mr. Levison [*dryly*]. Not exactly.

Rebecca. You don't like him, but you're wrong. He's a good sort—too good, that's the worst of him.

Mr. Levison [*doubtfully*]. Is he? I dare say. But he's poor, and—and he always talks morality.

Rebecca. Talks morality?

Mr. Levison. Yes, he says he's poor because he's honest and tells the truth, and all that. That moral talk's frightening: in business it always means an extravagantly high price. No one talks morality who does not mean to get six times as much as the thing's worth; at any rate that's my experience.

Rebecca [*laughing heartily*]. How funny you are and how interesting! Every word that's said then you think has something to do with the money people want to get from you?

Mr. Levison. Of course.

Rebecca. Poor Daddy! You don't understand him. There's no purpose in what he says. He's really very good and kind.

Mr. Levison. He brought you here, didn't he?

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Rebecca. No. [*Hesitates, then boldly.*] I wanted to come. I came alone.

Mr. Levison. Really? And he's not waiting outside for you? Not at the corner?

Rebecca. Of course he's not waiting, he doesn't even know I've come.

Mr. Levison [*rising, but still hesitating*]. And you really are nearly seventeen, not fifteen?

Rebecca [*getting up gravely, and turning round so that he can see her long dress*]. Now do I look fifteen? I was born in '87, I'm a Jubilee girl. [*Sitting down again.*] You must believe me. Why my second name's "Jubilee."

Mr. Levison. Is it? H'm! Write it down there, will you? H'm. Your father'll be expecting you home soon—to dinner?

Rebecca. No, I told him I was going to dine with a girl friend, Miss Hoppe. There now: [*laughing*]. Does that please you?

Mr. Levison. That's right. Always tell me everything and we'll get along like a house on fire. [*Goes over to her.*] So you wanted to see me, eh? little girl? [*She looks up at him.*] Would you come out to lunch with me, Rebecca?

Rebecca [*formally*]. I should be very pleased.

Mr. Levison [*flushing slightly*]. You look much

Isaac and Rebecca

better in that dress, taller: Won't you stand up and let me see?

[*Rebecca stands up.*]

Mr. Levison [*embarrassed*]. You are pretty! [*Puts his hand on her shoulder and draws her to him.*] If you were not so young, I'd ask you for a kiss. [*Slides his arm down to her waist.*] Would you give me one, Rebecca?

[*Rebecca slowly lifts her eyes to his. Mr. Levison kisses her on the lips, he feels her yield herself.*]

Mr. Levison [*noisily, to get rid of the significance of the act*]. There, now we are friends, eh? Oh, you are lovely, lovely. [*Moves away a step.*] What lips you have! we'll be great friends, won't we? [*Rebecca nods and looks up in his face.*] Will you do something for me?

Rebecca [*gravely, like a child*]. Yes, I will.

Mr. Levison. I want you to go out first, or my clerks'll talk and I don't want 'em to talk about you. I like you too much for that. You go out and wait for me at the next corner, the corner of the street leading to the bank, you know the corner? [*Rebecca nods quickly.*] I'll come in five minutes or so, do you mind waiting? [*Rebecca shakes her head "no" and smiles.*] You don't mind. You're a brave girl.

The Veils of Isis

[*She turns to go. Levison puts his arms round her from behind.*] But first I want a long kiss, a real kiss. [*Rebecca turns her head round and their lips meet. A long pause during which he kisses and caresses her.*] Now, run along, Rebecca, run along, my dear, I'll not be five minutes. [*She goes out, while he stands rooted in the middle of the room.*] She is a miracle, that girl, a blooming miracle! Seventeen, and kiss like that. She's everything—clever, bright, quiet—and beautiful. [*As if defending himself he speaks aloud.*] A lovely girl, any man might be proud of her—lovely and clever. What lips, what eyes! [*Going to his desk.*] If I'm the first she'll not repent it. She really cares for me, I do believe. How her lips trembled and clung! My God, I'm hot. But does she care for me? Or is it just my money? Well, what matter. Her kisses are just as sweet—perhaps sweeter. . . . She's well dressed, her father must make something. She'll deal with him. She told the truth. I need not trouble. It'll be all right. She cares for me a little perhaps. I must hurry. If she waits there long some fool of a clerk'll speak to her: D—n them! [*Pulls his desk to, and looks for his hat.*] How lovely she is, what lips, what a figure. [*Stands before the door.*] My heart's thumping, lips dry. I

Isaac and Rebecca

didn't believe I could feel like this. I'm more excited than I ever was in the biggest deal. By God, this is living. [*Goes out hastily.*]

A YEAR LATER

[*Isaac is in bed. Mrs. Goldschmidt comes into the room.*]

Mrs. Goldschmidt. A gentleman to see you, Sir.

Isaac. To see me, a gentleman; I'm in bed. I'm not vell. Vot gentleman, vot's his name?

Mr. Levison [*entering the room*]. It's only me, Isaac. Thought I'd come and see you. Heard you had a cold. Bad enough to keep you in bed, is it?

Isaac. Oh, Mr. Levison, this is kind. Yes, it's pleurisy I've got. I vos out in the rain, and this doctor shtuff, he no good.

Mr. Levison [*looking round*]. Have you no one to wait on you but that old woman? Where's Rebecca?

Isaac. She vent' out and has not come back yet. Young tings must go out.

Mr. Levison. But didn't she come back at three?

Isaac. She generally comes back about dree but I don't know to-day, I vos sleeping.

Mr. Levison. When did you awake?

The Veils of Isis

Isaac. About a quarter of an hour ago. Vot time is it now?

Mr. Levison. After nine. But don't you know where she is? You must know. A self-willed young girl like that ought not to be out alone. You know where she is, don't you?

Isaac. Perhaps I do.

Mr. Levison. Well, where?

Isaac. Vy should I tell you?

Mr. Levison [*getting angry*]. Because I want to know, and I mean good to her and no one else does.

Isaac. So you say.

Mr. Levison. But why don't you help me when I say I mean good to her?

Isaac. Vy should I help you, Reuben Levison? You took my girl from me, persuaded her to go out vid you. You gave her dose sable furs, which she says are cheap shtuff. But ven I vos young I deal in furs at Lemburg, and I know. . . .

Mr. Levison. Well, what's that to you? You brought her to see me, didn't you? I didn't ask you to. You brought her for something?

Isaac. She wanted to go: she vos discontent: vot could I do? You vos old and I thought you might help her like a fader: she's so pretty.

Isaac and Rebecca

Mr. Levison. Men don't feel like fathers to pretty girls; at any rate, I don't. And now she's got me. I care for her and want her. If she'll only play fair with me, I'll be good to her. She's a fool sometimes, too self-willed for anything. She's like a man. She just does what she wants to do. Now will you help me?

Isaac [weakly]. Vot can I do?

Mr. Levison. Does she go out with any one else, tell me? How did you guess the furs came from me? You know a lot, I expect.

Isaac. Perhaps I do, perhaps I don't.

Mr. Levison. Surely you want to help your daughter to get on, don't you?

Isaac. How do I know dot I am helping her? She told me often and often not to interfere.

Mr. Levison. But you must interfere, man. You must get her to be true to me. I'll give her more than anybody else.

Isaac. So you say.

Mr. Levison. If you'll help me all you can, I'll help you, give you an allowance, make it easy for you.

Isaac. Vot can you do more dan de doctors, and dey can't do noting. My head he ache and you cannot take it away. I get weaker every day, you can't

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make me stronger. I vish I could leave Rebecca some money; but I can't. . . .

Mr. Levison [*shrugs shoulders*]. But, Isaac, tell me. Rebecca was to have dined with me to-night. She did not come. I waited nearly an hour, and then I motored here. Where has she been in the meantime? Did she come here to-day at three?

Isaac. [*The old man tosses his head wearily as if fatigued.*] I don't know: I vos sleeping.

Mr. Levison. May I go into her room and look? It is in there? Isn't it? [*Pointing to a door.*]

Isaac [*lifting himself in bed*]. You must not, you must not. She vould leave me altogether den.

Mr. Levison [*looks at him angrily and shrugs his shoulders*]. Damnation!

Isaac [*awakened again*]. Vot did you give her besides furs?

Mr. Levison. Oh, I don't know, dresses, whatever she wanted.

Isaac [*nods his head*]. Did you give her jewelry—a golt bracelet?

Mr. Levison. No, has she one?

Isaac. Who gave her de bracelet? My little girl!

Mr. Levison. A bracelet! [*He stands still.*]

Isaac and Rebecca

Come, Isaac, you know more than you say. Tell me, who gave it her?

Isaac. I know nozing. I don't know if she have bracelet. Rebecca's all right. Vy you bozzer me?

Mr. Levison. My God, my God! [*Taking a sudden resolution, sits down by the bed.*] Look here, Isaac. I'll marry her; I will, by God! I can't live without her. I'll marry her at once. Don't you say anything about what you have said to me. But when she comes home, forbid her to go out again in the evening. Be firm. Say it is not kind to you. She's got a great affection for you. Say it's wrong to leave you alone, and I'll marry her, by God, I will. I always intended to since I knew I was the first, now my mind's made up.

Isaac. Rebecca's mind, perhaps he's not made up.

Mr. Levison. What do you mean, Isaac? You don't think she'll leave me in the lurch, and marry some one else, do you? You don't mean to say it's gone as far as that? Oh, my God, my God! Who is it? Tell me? Do!

Isaac. I know nozing. I've always told de trut.

Mr. Levison. All rot, that talk. You're damn cunning. You know a great deal more than you say. Why do you think she won't marry me?

Isaac. I know nozing. I tink if I vere a man

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tree times her age, like you, I'd marry her quick. All girls like marriage. You'll put it off and off. She say nozing, but she's very proud.

Mr. Levison. My God, I believe you're right, I've been a fool. She's everything I want, pretty, clever, and knows more than anybody'd guess. Will you fix it up, Isaac? Say you want her to marry me.

Isaac. No, you must do that. Why not wait for her, and say it yourself, or come in de morning?

Mr. Levison. Which would be the better day? One hardly knows what to do with her. She might be angry if I waited, and yet I hate to go away. What do you think, Isaac? Should I wait now, or should I come in the morning?

Isaac. I tink to-morrow, to-morrow is anozer day.

Mr. Levison. Well, I'll go now and come back to-morrow, but put in a good word for me, Isaac, you'll see I can be grateful—later! [*Goes.*]

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[*About midnight. Rebecca, in Russian Sables, comes into her father's room. l. c.*]

Rebecca. You awake, father? Mrs. Goldschmidt's asleep. I thought I'd come in and see how you are.

Isaac and Rebecca

Isaac. I'm awake, tear, I am awake, but vere have you been?

Rebecca. I have been to the theater.

Isaac. Really?

Rebecca. Really. Why shouldn't I tell you the truth? It's too much trouble to tell lies.

Isaac. Why didn't you go with Mr. Levison to dinner?

Rebecca [*quickly*]. Has he been here?

Isaac. Yes, my tear.

Rebecca. Well, what did he say?

Isaac. Oh, he say a lot of tings. He vant to know vere you vent. I told him I did not know. He asked me vedder you vere mit anybody else? I told him I not know.

Rebecca. That was right. I'll make Mr. Levison pay for prying.

Isaac. Oh, I vould not, Rebecca, I vould not. He's a rich man, and means good to you. He vants to marry you.

Rebecca. To marry me! He didn't say so?

Isaac. He vill propose. Oh, he's mad after you, mad. He vill propose, he say so. He vanted to wait for you to-night——

Rebecca [*her eyes narrowing*]. Because I did not meet him once or twice. He always wants to

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talk about himself and I want to go to the theaters and the opera. Oh, the opera! [*And she claps her hands.*] What else did he say to you, father? Tell me everything.

Isaac. Oh, he said he gave you the furs.

Rebecca. But how did he come to say he'd marry me? What made him say that? He has never said it to me.

Isaac [*wearily*]. I don't know. I asked him did he give you ze golt bracelet. He say "no," and ask me who give it you? I say I don't know.

Rebecca. The bracelet? But no one has given me any bracelet. Why should any one give me a bracelet?

Isaac. [*He shrinks.*] Don't be angry mit me, Rebecca, but I saw you mit a bracelet vonce and I thought perhaps he had given you the bracelet.

Rebecca [*laughing*]. You amuse me. Don't you recognize your own things, you silly Dadda? I got a chain from your tray, from underneath, and plaited it round four times into a bracelet.

Isaac [*sitting up in bed, excited*]. Dat's vot made him mad: Dat's vy he vant to marry you: dat's vy.

Rebecca [*nods head*]. Oh, you clever, clever Dad! You made him jealous. You clever Dad,

Isaac and Rebecca

who would have thought you'd bring him up to the scratch?

Isaac. I did it not on purpose. It vos jest chance, or perhaps Gott, Rebecca, ze Gott of our faders!

Rebecca. Anyway, it's a bit of all right. [*Laughs triumphantly.*] I've always heard that God helps those who help themselves.

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74

A French Artist

A French Artist

ONE night after dining with Henri Dartier, the critic and writer who has done so much to make modern English literature comprehensible to Frenchmen, we went into Pousset's *brasserie*, where from time to time one can meet most of the leaders of French thought.

Presently a pair came into the room who drew all eyes. The man was like a high priest, with black hair and long, silky black beard, regular features and pallid skin. As he came nearer the impression deepened; he was a very handsome man of about thirty-five, the great, dark eyes were superb and there was a pontifical majesty in the portly dignified figure. He dressed the part, too; he wore no collar, or rather the collar was a band of black *moiré* silk which seemed to form part of his waistcoat—not a spot of color about him—a study in black and white, for the black clothes set off the pallor of his skin. Beside him a tiny girl's figure, her head reaching hardly to his chin, her pale, gold

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hair was banded round her ears, framing her face, sharpening the thin oval of it, and accentuating the rather peaked, prominent nose, the red mouth, and small, bony chin. Her eyes held one—large, gray-blue eyes, enigmatic—emptied of expression. She might have stepped out of a canvas of Botticelli—an immature virgin, full of character by some primitive master. The contrast between the two was so astounding—the individualities of both so marked and so uncommon, that I turned eagerly to Dartier, who knows every one, to learn about them.

“Yes, I know them,” he replied to my question; “he is from Provence, an artist, Piranello: the girl’s his wife.”

“His wife,” I cried, “she might be his daughter.”

Dartier shrugged his shoulders.

“She is older than you think.”

“I should like to know them,” I remarked.

“Nothing easier,” was his reply, and he got up and called out, “Piranello, *mon ami!*”

A nearer acquaintance only sharpened my curiosity. Piranello was to me a new type; there was something of the pontiff not only in his looks, but in his nature; in his unaffected seriousness, in the slow gestures of his long, white fingers; something hieratic in his dignity and repose, a consciousness of

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individual worth, that would have been pomposity in any one less simple and sincere.

And his wife, Claire, was just as singular a personality. She talked very little; was very quiet; her extraordinary self-repression was in itself a distinction, yet each of her words counted, and if a good thing was said, or anything to excite her, any cry of passion or of revolt, the thin nostrils would vibrate, the eyes darken, and the whole face sharpen to intensity. . . .

Piranello was very courteous. In answer to the questions of Dartier, he said he had done no painting lately, but was interested in enamels and mosaics.

"The beginnings of half a dozen arts," he remarked, "or the culminating points, whichever you like. I have been busy, too, with some new jewelry," and his long, white fingers waved toward an ornament on the blue of his wife's dress. It was an imitation of an open oyster-shell, with a great pink pearl in the cup and a tiny black one at the side. Madame Piranello detached it from her dress without a word, and handed it to me. I could not help exclaiming with admiration; it was an astonishing copy in some metal or other and curiously enameled; the outside as rough as any oyster-shell, while the inside had a milky radiance, shot through with

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faint colors, like the most lovely mother-of-pearl, a perfect setting for the great gem. It would have been hard to find a more effective or extraordinary piece of jewelry.

“Jewelry should be barbaric,” Piranello said, “the gem is the subject; the artist must set it to show off its beauty, its strangeness, its individuality. It is what an incident of real life is to the story-teller; hé should only use it if it suits him, if he can make it significant—beautiful or terrible. Two or three diamonds side by side in a ring; a whole row of pearls cheek by jowl in a necklace, are merely symbols of vanity and wealth—evidence of vulgar bad taste. The pearls are selected because of their likeness one to another; whereas the charm of pearls, as of everything else, is in their unlikeness to each other. That is why I put my tiny black pearl there, to set off the exquisite pink glow of the master-gem . . .”

The man interested me, and the woman had a certain attraction; I was glad when, in answer to a request by Dartier, Piranello invited me to visit his studio.

“I have got my forge,” he said, “just off the Rue Ramey, away up beyond the Butte de Montmartre, where one is hidden from the hive, and Claire has

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made an interesting room or two, which you may care to see . . .”

When we parted for the night I asked Dartier about him.

“You will see for yourself,” he said. “Piranello has a real talent. He made a name ten years ago in Paris by painting girls like the Primitives, and old men like Balzac. Perhaps because his pictures affected us a good deal we used to call them the wicked virgins and wise saints: we Parisians always mock our emotions. You will see for yourself next Wednesday.”

On Wednesday I drove up to the Butte, and then got down and walked nearly to the fortifications along the slope of the hill turned away from Paris. There in a waste place I found the artist's house and studio. The house was the ordinary French suburban box, and from the outside seemed absolutely commonplace. But the door opened into a great vaulted room, like the refectory of some old convent. A staircase at the far end led to the upper part of the house. Beyond it I was told was the tiny kitchen. Between the arches of the vaulted room were paintings of primitives done on panels, and here and there primitive statues of saints in stone and marble. The furniture was all early

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renaissance; the whole room of the time of Henry II.

The little lady who came to meet me belonged to the same period. Claire seemed a little angular, a little stiff, just as the Gothic saints seemed a little stiff, because of the pointed folds of their drapery.

Piranello, she said, was in his studio. Would we care to look at the room first; we did care. It was a feast to the eye. Not many things in it, but everything chosen with unerring knowledge and taste. Here was a St. Rocque, standing with compassionate hands outspread over a lady who was ministering to his wound—an atmosphere of human pity and suffering about the group which gripped the heart. On the other side of the white vault a St. Louis in the same hard, gray stone with the cross on his breast and the *fleur-de-lis* of France on his raiment, the two fingers of the right hand uplifted in a gesture of admonition. Next to him a triptych of some early Florentine painter, noteworthy for the suave beauty of the faces, and for a page whose right hand was toying with a jeweled dagger while he waited on the Virgin.

Over the door by which I had entered was a window of renaissance glass, which threw gules of crimson and primrose on the narrow oaken table. On the table itself a vase of alabaster with one yellow

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rose in it. The simplicity and unity of effect made a singular appeal.

The little lady led me out by a side door under the stairs, and we found ourselves at once in the studio, where Piranello was at work. The studio was evidently built on for the sake of the light from above, which could be shaded at will with heavy, dark curtains. It was paved like the room we had just left with great slabs of stone, and at one end stood a huge forge, with immense bellows, which a little boy was working. Piranello came to meet us in an old blue blouse, all stained with blotches of paint and ochre by many scorchings. He had been working at a crucifix. The conception was ingenious. An enormous cliff-like hill of some rough metal represented the calvary, with forests, lakes, and foot-paths of a dozen colors, and toiling up the hill little figures of men and women of every race and every variety of costume. On the top the wooden cross all empty, with gouts and clots of blood on the nails and arms, and at the foot a woman prostrate—sorrow in every line of the broken figure.

“I never care to attempt the figure of the ‘Crucified One,’ ” said Piranello quietly, “it is the cross itself which is of such significance—the instrument of

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torture and death, turned into a symbol of faith and hope.”

* * * * *

It is curious when you come to know some one who is a personage how astonished you are afterward by the amount of talk that goes on about him. I had never heard of Piranello or his wife before, but after visiting them I seemed to hear of them on all sides. Some people declared that it was his wife and her strange beauty which had given him all his talent. But when you talked of the heads of his old men, modeled with extraordinary realism and understanding—heads weird and tortured and inspired—the critics shrugged their shoulders and thrust forth their lips contemptuously. Their malevolence did not weaken the impression made upon me by the artist and his wife.

In time I got to know Piranello rather well. The question of his wife's importance to his art interested me excessively. One day he showed me a wonderful picture done some years before of "Susanna and the Elders," in which his wife's girlish beauty was exposed with extraordinary realism and emotion, while lust itself was incarnate in the vicious masks of the peeping old men.

"You have been extraordinarily fortunate in your

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wife as a model," I exclaimed, "an ideal figure, is she not?" for indeed the unveiled charm of her adolescence redeemed the whole scene.

Unconscious of what was passing through my mind, Piranello remarked casually:

"A good model: art begins in imitation, but it must become interpretation before it's worth much."

"Her figure is not only lovely," I went on, "but just what you wanted here to lift the portraits of those ignoble old beasts to the plane of great art—a wonderful model! How lucky you were to find her."

I had roused him at last.

"Not lucky," he said; "luck had nothing to do with it. We artists have always our models in our heads. I'll explain if you like. Quite early I was taken by the primitive masters; I suppose their sincerity, *naïveté* and frankness appealed to me—the more complicated we are, the more simplicity moves us. Then I went to northern Italy, and studied the beginnings of painting, as I might have gone to Flanders, or indeed to Russia. Do you know that the Russian school of painting dates from the early part of the fifteenth century? I could show you a picture of a Russian primitive which you would mistake for an Italian. I went to Orvieto and Ravenna

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and spent three weeks there: I learned a great deal from Signorelli; the astounding vigor, directness and force in him and in other early masters affected me with pleasure as poignant as pain. . . .

“Gradually I began to find myself. The passion in me gave me an ideal of girlhood, and I began to see what I wanted. . . . But I had no formula, you understand, no symbol. I began doing girls’ portraits ingenuously, catching a glimpse of innocence here, and there—the dawning of a child’s soul. Bit by bit the surprising richness of life revealed itself to me, and I began seeking, seeking, and as soon as I began to seek with faith I began to find on this hand and on that, models with the features and figures I wanted for this or that effect. Gradually my own desires grew definite and distinct and then I met my wife. . . . Was she sent to me, or did my desire call her out of the crowd? She affected me like a piece of music heard in some previous existence, my whole soul was poured out like water at her feet. I was all one hunger and thirst for her, and she cared for me as well. . . . Of course her dress was all wrong, and her hair stupid—modern; she had been trying to make her face pretty like every one’s face, like the face of a fashion plate. I showed her what her face really was, the distinction

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of it, and what her figure was and the subtle, superlative attraction of it. . . . She seized on the idea, womanlike, and as soon as she dressed as I wished, and saw the sensation she created when she went abroad, she developed the idea with great talent. She's very fine. . . ."

"That explains part of your work, but it does not explain the other side of your talent—your men's heads. . . ."

"The interest of a man's face," he said, "is all of the intellect, spiritual, while the woman's is all of the body; the ideal of the one is passion and suffering; the ideal of the other grace and innocence. I love a man's head when it is worn hard by intense feeling and furrowed by thought. I love the mask of the fowl bird of prey with the fat Jew nose, greedy, coarse mouth, and obscene vulture neck. I love the broad face of the lion, with the square jaw, low forehead, heavy brows: courage, cruelty, hate, stamped all over it: or the narrow mask of avarice with its thin lips and pointed teeth: the smile of conscious power and the clawlike, grasping fingers. Oh, I come across superb men's heads everywhere. But strange to say, it is life which supplies me with all my ideals of men: the models themselves suggest the artistic treatment, indicate the heightening touches,

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whereas with the girls' faces and figures the idea is always within me, suggested by desire. . . . I don't know which is the more effective artistically: probably my girls are truer, deeper than my men. They have less of life in them, and more of ideal beauty: sometimes I think it is the ideal that endures, and sometimes life and the sense of life, but I don't know—no one knows. . . .

"I am still seeking, seeking, but I have got out on a by-path, I'm afraid. My first impulse seems to be exhausted. . . . I don't mean that," he added quickly. "I mean that it is accomplished in some sort. I think of going to Belgium and Holland. I want fecundating. All this cursed enamel work is not my true work, but it has taught me new combinations of colors—new iridescent effects. I am getting ripe for a new start. . . ."

I could not help wondering whether the woman had come to the same point. Madame Piranello was more secretive, or was it modest reticence? Still, now and then she let drop a word which was significant.

On one occasion, I remember, I asked them to lunch at a Paris restaurant. The fashion of the moment had given women a sheath-like dress of great simplicity. The fashion could easily be ap-

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proximated to the style of the Primitives, and Madame Piranello had brought about the combination dexterously. Her figure could not help but be slight, yet there was a suggestion of round liveness about it which was very seductive.

"I am so sorry," she said, "that we are late, but the Master did not like my dress: it does not fall in pointed Gothic angles. Artists," she added, with her eyes upon mine, "are slow to admit that their ideals may develop and girls become women. . . ."

There had evidently been a dispute between them on the subject, for Piranello took her up quickly.

"That's not the point," he exclaimed, "there's an ideal in every one, and your ideal is not of the woman-mother. You confuse all one's ideas of the fitness of dress, and——"

"And the result is perfection," I broke in hastily, to clear the air: but though Madame Piranello had remained silent she had not changed her opinion. Her eyes had grown dark, like violets in water, and the little nostrils beat quickly: yet she was wise enough to meet rebuke with silence.

* * * * *

A year or so later I met them at Fontainebleau, and found that the paths had diverged a great deal further. While his wife prepared afternoon tea we

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talked in the garden. He was now full of Memling, and the Van Eycks and Matsys:

"You have no idea the great things I found," he cried; "I shall go back to Flanders for a year. They have given me a dozen ideas. I am working at a gaudy, great picture now. Adam and Eve leaving the garden—of course of their own free will," and he laughed. "Eve is sorrowing at the loss of the accustomed, and fearful; but Adam is delighted with the sovereignty of the larger world—his eyes aglow with the vision splendid."

"Madame Piranello standing for Eve?" I guessed.

"No, no," he replied, with a little temper, "women seek admiration and not artistic effects. It's a great pity. . . . You see, Claire's older than she was, and now she wants to show her tiny waist and round figure, and she's too short for the style, too short-legged. It's a great pity. . . . Still, perhaps it's for the best: another ideal has shaped itself in me. She must be tall, and very slight. There must be about her the adorable awkwardness of childhood: the indecision of form of the young girl," and he drew the outline of the figure with his thumb in the air. "Just a hint, perhaps, of curve in the hips, but not the vase-like roundness of womanhood—I love the subtle hesitation of line, every indication of

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youth, youth with curiosity in the eyes and eagerness—the possibility but not the suggestion of passion.”

“Your new ideal will be difficult to find,” I remarked.

“No, no!” he exclaimed, “one of these days I am sure to come across it. Life’s a treasure-house, a miraculous treasure-house which holds everything, a thousand, thousand ideals. Its richness is inconceivable: while the idea is yet vague in the mind, nature presents you with its realization. I’ll meet my ideal one of these days.”

“And how about your old men?” I asked.

“That was all rather crude, don’t you think?” he replied carelessly. “A mere contrast with my girl figures: a sort of rebound of passion. I no longer feel that impulse. I don’t want worn, tired heads of old men, but the perfect figure of the mature man, force in the yoke-like shoulders, energy in the long, flat steel bands of the thigh-muscles, and the face of conquering achievement. I have a perfect model for my Adam,” he added, “Adam who finds a larger freedom in disobedience and a wider kingdom in revolt: he must be as strong as Michel Angelo’s ideal, but not so tortured: more easeful, graceful, I think, more like a figure of Donatello. . . .”

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Next spring the Adam and Eve of Piranello made a week's sensation in Paris, and shortly afterward the gossips were all agog: he had left his wife without rhyme or reason, they said, and was going about with a foreigner, a Danish girl of extraordinary appearance.

I was eager to see her and to know what would be the result of the separation. Madame Piranello, I was informed, was living very quietly in a little house on the borders of the forest of Fontainebleau. She seemed perfectly happy, Dartier told me.

"There's a great deal of worldly wisdom in that little thing," he remarked; "she will fall on her feet. The son of R——, the Minister of Justice, is mad about her. But she will not marry him. My wife says she really cares for Piranello in spite of his bad treatment of her, or perhaps because of it," the genial cynic added with a smile. "But Piranello's in a bad way," he went on, "his latest ideal is a caution: you must see her. . . ."

Sure enough, I did see her a week afterward at a reception in the Latin Quarter, where artists and editors came together and a few society people, just to reconcile smartness with talent.

She came into the room a little before Piranello: she was as tall as he was—with a crown of ashen-

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fair hair, parted at the side and brought into a big sweep across the forehead like a boy's, and knotted tightly at the nape: long, green eyes, with triangular face and pointed chin. Her figure seemed to be all angles: even Piranello could scarcely complain of her roundness. She talked French with a harsh, northern accent. She was not sympathetic to me: there was something catlike cruel in the hard, naked eyes, something of the snake in that flat, pointed face.

Piranello was as hieratic as ever: but not so self-poised as he had been. He watched his Dane, too, as he had never watched his wife. I wondered vaguely what the upshot would be. He asked me to come to a private view of some of his pictures in the Rue de Seze. I went. The man's art was disquieting. Here and there a new symbolism showed itself and certain ghostly effects of peculiar intensity and significance had come into his work: but the color scheme was gloomy and brutal. The joy of living had disappeared from his work—passion it seemed had its Nemesis shadow.

Still his art was interesting. There was a head of Jupiter thrown out over clouds as fine as anything, and modern—for this God had sightless, blind eyes. Near by was a girl-child's figure, very slight and

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tall and thin—too thin, and yet with beauty in its awkwardness: the face in some strange way suggested a skull: it was entitled *Une fille d'Eve* and had an immense success in Paris. There was something *macabre* about it, something preternaturally sinister.

Piranello was no longer as frank as he used to be: he would not talk about himself and his aims as of old, perhaps he was not so sure of himself. I felt the solution of the problem would be with Madame Piranello.

Madame Dartier took me one day to see her at Fontainebleau. There were a couple of men in the room—one a lame man with a powerful head, and a look on his face of suffering. He had had a bad fall, I learned, from horseback—and had injured his spine: his life was measured to him in months by the doctors. He had been an admirer of Madame Piranello for years and was comparatively content now, because he could see her without constraint and had induced her to use his motor car. The other visitor was a young man of a very different type. He was the R—— of whom Dartier had spoken: with his brown hair, gray eyes and short, sturdy figure he looked like a Norman. His family was very rich, Madame Dartier told me. He

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had studied law in Paris, and had published a volume of poems. He was a good deal younger than Madame Piranello, and evidently very much in love with her. Madame Dartier was certain that Claire would end by marrying him.

"It would be the best thing in the world for her," she said; "she really deserves some happiness after that wild life with Piranello."

"Does she care for him?" I asked.

"Of course," replied Madame Dartier, "she is five or six years older than he is, and his devotion would win any woman in time—especially one who knows life as well as Claire knows it. Piranello made her see all the colors of it, I can tell you."

"Why don't they marry?" I asked. "Surely Piranello will give her a divorce."

"Oh, that's all arranged," said Madame Dartier. "One good thing about you men is that you seldom play dog-in-the-manger as women love to do. Claire will be free in a month or two. But I'm afraid she's hesitating: you see she had a real passion for Piranello, and after the fire's burnt out, we women cover up the ashes and keep them warm for a long time. . . ."

As the afternoon wore away we all went for a walk in the great forest, the finest in the world, I

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sometimes think, and I had an opportunity to talk quietly to Madame Piranello.

I told her quite frankly that I had seen Piranello lately, and was interested in his work.

"You were a real friend of his, I know," she remarked; warmly, I thought.

"I was, indeed," I said, "and am still, and therefore very sorry that there is this cloud between you: in you he has lost his best friend."

She looked at me frankly and her eyes were pathetic:

"He does not think so," she began: "but perhaps you are right. At any rate, I'm frightened when I think of him, frightened and anxious. . . .

"He has a lot of good in him"—like all women, she would try to justify her feelings by reason—"a lot of good, and he will come to grief, I'm afraid. Artists all strain after peculiarities and the quest is dangerous: the preterhuman is not always the superhuman, oftener indeed it is the inhuman," she added. . . . "That woman he has got now is a maniac, a *detraquée*: one has only got to look at her to see it, a morphino-maniac or worse."

"His pictures are wonderful," I said.

"Oh, yes," she answered, "yes, but not healthy any more."

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Her insight astounded me.

"You see, he no longer has you for his model," I said; "you were his ideal."

I had touched the right note at last.

"Do you know," she said gravely, "I think women know more about life than men. He and I were made for each other really, only he does not see it. It is a pity—you complicated ones always miss the obvious. He wanted a change, at least his body did, and *mon Dieu* he's got it. She has a temper like a fiend, you know, and she'll wear him to a rag, because he's a real artist, is Nello: his art is his life, and as soon as his art deteriorates he'll go to the bad."

"Why don't you see him, and tell him all that?" I asked. "You have clearer eyes than he has, and who knows, you might save him still." I was drawing the bow at a venture.

She looked at me questioningly: a half smile stole across her face: yet her eyes were kind: I thought I understood. . . .

Three months later Madame Dartier said to me:

"Do you know that Monsieur and Madame Piranello are together again? He nearly killed his Dane one night: he found her morphia drunk with the coachman: and he turned them out into the night:

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she has disappeared, and a good thing, too. . . . Claire went back to him at once. She's good, if you like, but foolish—blind, I mean, to her own interest as all good women are. R—— would have married her at any moment, and given her everything. . . .”

“Everything, except the one thing she wanted,” I added. Madame Dartier smiled and nodded with perfect comprehension.

When I spoke to Dartier, I found him less hopeful:

“I believe Piranello still sees his Dane: she's like a taste for absinthe, that woman: if you once get it you'll die with it or of it,” and he laughed. “If Claire ever finds him out there will be a final rupture. She's very proud and won't stand it. What he can see in that bag of bones I can't imagine, yet she holds him like a glue-pot.”

The following summer Dartier's prediction came true.

Madame Piranello, he told me, had left her husband finally: she had caught him with the Dane, whom he would not promise to give up.

“A miserable business altogether,” said Dartier. “Piranello is going to the devil, though I hear he is working on a big picture—the Faust story. He

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has altered terribly. He takes morphia, too, now; like grows to like."

"And Madame Piranello?" I questioned.

"Oh, she's all right," he replied. "A charming little woman. My wife had her here for two or three weeks: she is now living again at the little house near Fontainebleau: my wife says she will not be unmarried long. There are half a dozen men after her. She is charming, you know, and decorative and wise to boot."

I acquiesced, but I was a little hurt by his careless talk. I determined to call on Madame Piranello and see for myself how the wind was blowing.

I found just a touch of bitterness in her which I regretted: it came out when we talked of Piranello.

"So you tried the great experiment," I began. "It was very brave of you—very brave and kind."

"A poor farce," she said. "We women cannot give sight to the blind: God alone can do that."

"It was a mistake, then?" I asked.

Her eyebrows went up.

"That Danish fiend has got him," she said; "now we shall see what she makes of him. If she helps him to great things, she's justified: but she won't. I know him so well. He's a big child, and needs to

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be taken *caré* of. Really I always took great care of him, though he did not know it, and now . . . she only wants a companion on the road to hell."

She broke off.

"She informed me one day that he had made me, that I owed whatever talent I had to him—*la bonne blague*—it's very little one can owe anybody. . . ."

I was struck by her wisdom.

"I wish you would tell me," I said, "about your early life!"

"Oh," she said, "there's nothing to tell. I was brought up in the usual way. Perhaps a little more strictly than usual—a Convent school and a bourgeois home—all stupid and proper, you know. Of course we girls talked, and what one did not know, the other did, and if we were kept on the chain, so to speak, our thoughts and imaginations were free and they roamed about in vagabond fancies. What a gorgeous life that is of a girl's day-dreams, and nightly imaginings. The day dreams—all poems of fairy princes and leaders of men and heroes. And the night fancies when one can pull the clothes over one's head and imagine what one likes, trying to relieve our desires in dreams—the fear of the pursuer, and the hope that we shall be overtaken and

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feel the strong arms about us, and the man's lips on ours. . . .

"Then one afternoon Piranello came and took away my breath. Oh, I admit it—he's so handsome and dark and strong, so different from anything I had imagined—so priestlike, interesting. I was all in a flutter. He took me to his studio with my mother, and I saw his paintings—and that astonishing Madonna he did with the curious half-smile of content more enigmatical than Leonardo's. Of course, I loved him. Love taught me both what he wanted and what I wanted. . . .

"Curious, isn't it? One does not see one's own type at first. As a girl one's a fool. I would have given anything for a little Grecian nose—one seeks to hide one's peculiarities, instead of accentuating them. How blind one is, and then suddenly one learns from a man or a painting, or gradually by experience, that it is better to be oneself, and by being oneself one suddenly becomes a personage—originality is individuality, personality—anything you like—even genius. . . ."

"You are very wise," I said. "It is quite true: all you say is quite true; but how did the difficulty arise?"

She sighed a little.

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"I hardly know. Piranello wanted to keep me as I was. But I learned the lesson: I was changing—love had taught me many things, passion, too, had taught me. He wished me to be stationary, innocent and angular of body, with unseeing eyes. But I could not remain a girl, and he would not realize that it is the hint of understanding which makes innocence mysterious and the suggestion of curve which makes the line seductive. My development was normal: it followed the ordinary course, while he is a sort of morbid development."

"Will you never go back to him again?" I asked.

"Oh, never," she replied. "It's final. I did all I could, more than I ought to have done. It was all useless, and worse than useless. He has gone under and wants to go lower. . . . A woman must not let pity master her: it is as dangerous for her as it is for the man to let passion master him—passion and compassion are our mortal enemies."

* * * * *

It was two or three years before I saw or heard of them again, and then I got a message through Dartier from Piranello, asking me to come and see his pictures. I went and was shocked by his appearance. He had shrunk to one half his former size and aged beyond recognition. The face that had

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been rather plump was all seamed and lined and wrinkled. The skin had fallen into pouches, the large eyes had grown small: the black hair all gray, scant on the temples, wispy, thin:

"Ah, I have changed," he said: the very voice had dwined away.

After talking of this and that he soon got on his art.

"I want to show you my pictures," he cried, "my great picture. It is symbolic. You know I used to talk of life as a treasure-house in which you found everything. It's not a treasure-house," he said, coming close to me and speaking in a whisper. "It's hell," and his yellow, tired eyes bored into mine. . . .

"You know the old legend of Faust?" he went on. "He asks the devil for this and for that and the devil gives him all he asks, and as he gives, the devil takes pieces of his soul in exchange, till he has got it all. . . . Life gives us this and that of our heart's desire, and takes our soul in exchange piecemeal, and our friends come to us and beg us not to give the last bit when we have already given it," and he grinned savagely, "and then we die because without a soul the body rots, doesn't it? the soul's the salt. . . . I've imagined the world-devil like a king. He

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gives Faust riches and honor and beauty—girl after girl, fashioned to his desire, and when Faust asked for more he said, 'You have nothing more to give me in exchange. You are all mine. You have been mine for a long time: don't bother me—you silly fool!'

His voice had grown shrill. I stared at him: there was insanity in his working face and in the wild sadness of his bloodshot eyes.

"And your Dane?" I asked, to shake off the effect of his bitterness.

"She's dead," he threw out indifferently, "she took an overdose one night. . . ."

* * * * *

I never saw him again, but I heard of him only last year. It came about in this way: I was invited to M. Souchard's, you know the man who made a great fortune in Paris by the lines of steamers. There I met Claire. She had married R—— shortly after our last talk, and had now two children. It was at her home that I heard of Piranello again from Dartier.

"A funny history," he said. "I always knew that she would succeed and that Piranello would come to grief. We are all wise after the event: the unexpected soon becomes the inevitable."

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"What happened?" I asked.

"She must not guess we are talking about it," he said, drawing me aside. "I can tell you all there is to be told in five minutes. Piranello had a little Italian model, with whom he was in love, and she had a friend as usual, her *amant de coeur*. One night Piranello found them in the studio together: he had a mania for discoveries, you may remember. I suppose he thought himself as strong as ever, for he attacked the young Italian, who threw him, and he struck against the great crucifix, you remember his enameled crucifix. The cross, it appears, tipped over and crushed him—the cross of his own making. . . ."

NICE, May, 1910.

A Fool's Paradise

A Fool's Paradise

WESTBURY and Clayton had been friends since their student days. Westbury was a general practitioner, who in twenty years had brought it to Harley Street and comparative riches. Clayton, on the other hand, had been well off even as a student, and had specialized as soon as he could. After getting his degree in London he had spent five years in German *Augen-Kliniken*, and was now one of the first oculists in London, and esteemed even in Berlin and Vienna. He cared little for money and much for his craft, and as he grew older the scientific side of his work became an art to him of engrossing interest. The two men were dissimilar in looks, as in purpose and mind. John Westbury was an ordinary short, stout Englishman, with an irregular, strong face and kindly brown eyes; he liked his profession, except the getting up at night, and he worked hard because he wanted to leave his wife and children well provided for, and was energetic by nature. His chief pleasure was a night at

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a music-hall or a game of golf. Clayton, on the other hand, was unmarried, slight and tall, with hatchet face, thin features, and visionary gray eyes which had a sort of mesmeric attraction for some women and children. He found it impossible to make new friends, a sort of shyness having grown upon him through his absorption in his art; but he loved to motor about the country at random; and when he could get Westbury to accompany him he was delighted, for Westbury not only recalled his past youth to him, but made the present vivid with stories and scraps of practical experience.

In the August of 1908 the two friends were on a motor drive through the South of England. They took it very leisurely, going hither and thither as fancy or whim directed. A week of such vagrancy had rather bored Westbury, who always wanted some purpose even in pleasure. He could not help preferring the known comforts of life to the untried distractions; he suddenly proposed that they should go to Winchester and visit the cathedral and school. He thought it would be a good opportunity to decide whether the school would suit his eldest son, of whom he was inordinately proud. Clayton assented, though a definite intention when he was pleasuring annoyed him like a straight road. They spent the

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night in a very prim hotel in Winchester, and in the morning went over the school and saw the wooden platters the boys ate from, and were amused to hear how the scholars arranged the mashed potatoes round their quaint plates so as to keep the gravy within bounds. After an hour or so in the old-world surroundings they got into the car again, and went out to Holy Cross and tasted the thin beer and bread given in alms to every wayfarer for some five hundred years now. Westbury wished to visit the cathedral, but Clayton proposed to drive somewhere into the country and take pot-luck for lunch. Westbury hated pot-luck; but as Clayton had yielded to him in almost everything day after day, he felt he must risk it, especially as the chauffeur assured him that he knew a place near Petersfield where one could get a very good lunch indeed. The chauffeur's promise was more than fulfilled, and after an excellent plain meal the two men mooned down the village high street that straggled about as if it, too, were without purpose in the world.

Of a sudden, just where the street broke into the open country, they came upon a knot of boys making fun of a youth who stood with his back to a gate laughing. Westbury's attention was immediately

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caught by the unusual spectacle. He questioned one of the urchins.

"It's only Clarence Jones," said the boy. "He's not right, sir; he's funny, and he do say funny things; he talks and laughs to himself, and that makes we laugh."

"You oughtn't to tease him," said Westbury. "Where does he live?"

"With his mother, there," replied the boy, pointing to a homely little cottage a hundred yards from the road, with a few trees about it.

"He doesn't look like an idiot," said Westbury to Clayton, who seemed to take no interest in the boy's explanation.

"No," Clayton admitted, waking up; "a well-formed head. Is he an idiot?"

"They say so," replied Westbury carelessly. "A merciful providence, isn't it, that so many idiots seem to be happy? This fellow appears to be highly amused."

"Rather unusual, isn't it?" asked Clayton, looking at the idiot more intently. "There seems to be a sort of meaning in his laughter. I wonder whether he is an idiot?"

"Of course he is," Westbury decided. "No sane

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person would stand there to be mocked at and laugh with delight."

Clayton did not appear to be convinced, for he went over to the youth and began to talk to him, examining him the while covertly. Westbury, on the other hand, followed his bent by trying to find out from the gang of boys all about Jones.

It appeared that his mother was the widow of a gamekeeper, who had been beaten to death one night by poachers. Westbury scented a tragedy, and was eager to learn all about the case; but the urchins had not much to tell him.

Strange to say, Clayton appeared to be peculiarly interested in the idiot.

"A most extraordinary case," he said, returning to Westbury. "I want to examine him properly. I should like to talk with his father."

"He's only got a mother," replied Westbury, "but we could go and see her. I expect she'll be delighted to see you if you think you can do anything for him. What do you make of him?"

"I want to examine him," repeated Clayton.

"There is not much to be done with him," remarked Westbury. "He's been an idiot from birth, I hear."

Just then the idiot appeared to notice Westbury

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for the first time, for he broke into peals of wild, hysterical laughter, bending down and rubbing his legs with his hands in uncouth gestures of delight.

"He's as mad as a March hare," exclaimed Westbury, with a certain natural irritation.

"He may be," Clayton admitted, "but let's go and see the mother."

Mrs. Jones was a thin, neatly dressed woman, whose speech was much above her position in life. She had good eyes and forehead, and the small, regular features showed traces of prettiness, but her expression was subdued and anxious. When told by Westbury that they were two doctors, and that they took an interest in her boy, "At least, my friend here, the great oculist, does," she invited them into her cottage, and at Clayton's request showed him into the little parlor in order that he might examine her son at his ease. Westbury preferred to stay with the mother in the little porch and finish his cigar.

He soon heard her whole story. Her husband, a great, strong man, head gamekeeper to the lord of the manor, had been brought home eighteen years before with his head battered in.

"There must have been three or four at him," she declared proudly. "He died in that room in the

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morning just as the nurse came; I was only half conscious—silly-like. When I saw them carry him in with his poor head all blood I seemed to turn cold inside. I went all dazed. I was expecting my baby, sir, and was not very strong. . . . I suppose I was out of my head, for when I got to notice things he had been buried two days”—she wiped her eyes and sniffed—“and I was all alone with my daughter and the baby. . . .

“The old squire has been very good to me. He has allowed me ten shillin' a week ever since, and this house rent-free. Oh! he's been very kind always; and my daughter married a draper at Alton, and is very well off. She and her husband Mr. 'Arding, a very superior man, a gentleman, as you might say, often drive across of a Sunday to see me. It's his own trap, kept private. . . . I'm quite comfortable, though it's lonesome here. You see, I was lady's-maid in London before my marriage, and this cottage seems very lonely-like. . . . I'm always grieving about Clarence; he was such a dear big baby. He never cried in his life; but just when he ought to have begun learning his letters and noticing things, he took to this laughin'. . . . If your friend could cure him we'd all be thankful, I'm sure, though Clarence is not so silly as you'd think . . .

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he is wonderful sensible sometimes . . . and he always does what I tell him. . . .”

Westbury comforted her as best he could, and talked of other things, wondering in himself the while what on earth Clayton could find in the idiot to keep him so long.

Suddenly the door of the parlor opened, and Clayton beckoned to them. Westbury preceded the widow into the little room. The idiot again burst into his hideous cachinnation at the sight of Westbury, doubling himself up with laughter. The mother walked over to him and stroked his head, saying:

“You must not laugh at the gentleman, Clarence; it’s rude to laugh.”

Clarence evidently understood, and tried to obey. He stood with twisted face, giggling, trying his best to control himself.

“A most remarkable case, Mrs. Jones,” said Clayton. “I don’t know yet, but I’m inclined to think I can cure your son and make him like other boys.”

The mother’s face flushed, and she put up her hand as if to ward off the shock. “Really, sir?” was all she could say.

“I’m not sure, you know,” Clayton went on. “I don’t want to lift your hopes too high, but the boy

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seems to me sensible enough were it not for this laughing."

"That's it, that's it, sir!" cried the mother, stretching out both her hands. "He's sensible underneath, is Clarence, and as good as gold. He's never any trouble at all, and he understands any questions I ask him: don't you, Clarence, dear?"

The boy looked at her and began to laugh quietly, as if amused by the question.

"I shall have to see him in London," Clayton explained, "and make a close examination. I must get a strong light on his eyes. Can you bring him or send him up to me?"

The woman hesitated.

"If I decide that an operation is necessary I would not charge you anything for it; but I should have to keep the boy for a couple of months to insure a proper recovery."

"It's very good of you, I'm sure," said Mrs. Jones, "and I'll tell my daughter what you say. Do you think you can make him all right, sir?" Her doubting eagerness was pathetic.

"I'm inclined to think so," repeated Clayton. "Here's my card, and if you decide to let me have a try, I'll do my best."

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"Thank you, sir," she said. "I'll tell all you say to my daughter and her husband, and let you know."

* * * * *

As they walked toward the inn Westbury questioned Clayton.

"What bee's got in your bonnet, Dave?" he cried. "Nothing on earth could do that idiot any good unless you could put new brains into his head. What do you mean by talking of an examination?"

"It's a very peculiar case," replied Clayton, as if to himself, his eyes turned inward in thought, "a most interesting case"; and then, waking up, "I'll let you know about it, if they send him to me."

"The only interesting thing I can see in the matter," rejoined Westbury, "is the fact that the shock of seeing her husband murdered made the poor woman give birth to an idiot, and an idiot who laughs at everything. Murderous cruelty producing idiot laughter—it's a mad world. . . ."

* * * * *

Some few months later Westbury called one afternoon on Clayton, and spent the evening with him in his study overlooking Regent's Park. They had been talking a few minutes, when Westbury exclaimed:

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"By the way, I hear you have had Clarence Jones up here and worked a miracle on him."

"The operation was successful," Clayton admitted.

"What was the matter with him, really? You were very mysterious about it."

"Not mysterious," replied Clayton, "only doubtful. I could not see his eyes properly at first, but when I had him here and examined him closely it was all pretty plain sailing."

"What was wrong with him?" cried Westbury. "Did it explain that continual laughing of his?"

"It explained everything," replied Clayton. "His eyes were abnormal. You wouldn't meet another pair like them in a lifetime. . . . There were little growths in the pupils, so that each eye had half a dozen facets, so to speak. The boy saw every separate object in half a dozen different aspects, just as if he were looking into those concave and convex mirrors you have in fairs. Nearly every object therefore was amusing to him, though some things, of course, appeared elongated and lugubrious. . . . I had to remove all the little growths one by one—rather ticklish work—and give the pupil time to knit and heal, and the eye was perfect."

"My God!" cried Westbury, "what a magician's

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wand that scalpel of yours is; with it you turn an idiot into an ordinary boy—and an unpleasant idiot at that,” he added, a little malevolently. “His mother, I suppose, is enchanted?”

“She writes very nicely to me about it. She was altogether a superior woman, you remember. . . . I have her letter somewhere,” and he turned over some papers on his desk.

“I suppose you’ll be going down to see them?” remarked Westbury. “There’s no pleasure like the pleasure we have in a really wonderful cure.”

“I’ll run down some time in the summer probably,” Clayton rejoined; “but there is nothing to go for immediately. The boy’s eyes when I sent him home were perfectly normal and strong. . . .”

* * * * *

In the early spring Clayton was surprised and not a little annoyed by a letter he received from Mrs. Jones. She asked him to come down and see Clarence as soon as he could. The boy was “out of sorts,” she said, and caused her great anxiety.

“Out of sorts——” Clayton could not understand it. But as he practiced chiefly for his own pleasure and had been really interested in the operation on the boy’s eyes, he took an early opportunity of motoring to the village.

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Mrs. Jones met him at the garden gate.

"I got your telegram, sir, saying you were coming," she exclaimed hurriedly. "He's inside, but I must tell you about him first. He's not happy, sir; he's very depressed and disappointed and angry——"

"Angry," repeated Clayton; "but not with me, I hope?" he asked, smiling.

"With every one," repeated Mrs. Jones, "I'm sorry to say, and with you, too, sir, very angry. You'll be gentle with him, won't you, sir?"

"Of course, of course," replied Clayton, his mind trying to grasp the new situation; "of course I shall be gentle. Everything's new to him, I suppose, and strange?"

"That's it, sir; and he thinks everything's your fault."

"I'm very sorry. Let me see him at once," said Clayton, really astonished. "I'll do my best, you know."

In another minute the doctor and patient were face to face. The youth stood in the corner of the room near the fireplace with averted face glowering.

"What is it, Clarence?" asked Clayton pleasantly, going toward him. "I hear you're unhappy."

The youth looked at him without a word, his

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face set with rage; and now that his eyes were normal one could see that it was a fine face, well-shaped and well-featured; but the merry look had gone, and in its place was scowling hate.

"What's the matter?" repeated Clayton, a little shocked by the youth's manifest rage and dislike.

"Matter," repeated the young man slowly. "I suppose I ought to be grateful to you, oughtn't I?" he sneered.

"I should think so," replied Clayton, a little nettled, "though I don't expect gratitude. I did my best for you, and got nothing out of it."

"Did I ask you to do anything for me?" cried the boy. "Who asked you to interfere?"

"Any one would do a kind act without being asked," Clayton answered gravely.

"A kind act?" cried the young man, seizing the table with both hands and thrusting his hot face forward. "A kind act, you call it?"

"Certainly," retorted Clayton; "a kind act to turn a laughing idiot into an ordinary youth. I should think so, indeed."

"Ordinary be damned!" cried the youth; "ordinary! Till you came I was happy, happy as a king. I was more than contented. Everything I saw was wonderful to me. Even the boys who laughed at

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me and mocked me were comic creatures who amused me. There they were, the grinning faces, dozens of 'em—all different, too funny for anything. I was amused from morning till night. My mother took care of me; I lacked nothing; all my life was a dream of pleasure. . . .

“Then you came where you were not wanted, and with your damned cleverness robbed me of all the joy and wonder, turned me from a king with all the world for my fools into a dull, ordinary creature.

“Not ordinary even,” he went on wildly, as if the word excited him, “but behind everybody else, more stupid. I cannot even go to school. I don't know anything. Every one pities and despises me now. Here I sit all day long trying to learn to read and to make pothooks. The devil could not have done worse to me than you've done, you——” and the young man threw himself into a chair and leaned his burning face on his hands.

“Come, come,” said Clayton gently, going over to him, genuinely affected by his misery. “Come, come, Clarence, all this will pass. You will soon overtake the other boys, and as soon as you learn to read easily you will have books and all the wisest men as your companions. You will soon see that you are better off.”

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“Do you think I haven’t told myself that?” cried the youth, looking up with streaming eyes. “But it is not true; the charm and wonder of the world have gone from me forever. I shall never see the comic faces again; never again notice the thousand different shades of expression, never again. How could you? How could you? . . . Oh, my God! how miserable I am!”

Clayton drew up a chair; he was interested, in spite of himself, by the bitterness of the youth’s grief. He put his arm around his shoulder.

“In a little while, Clarence, you will be able to study all sorts of expressions not only in the living people about you, but in books. You will come to know all the great men and women who have lived before you.

“I have taken away from you an unreal world; but you have got the real world instead, and it is an infinitely richer world than the one you have lost, for it holds all the past as well as the present. Think of that.” He spoke with infinite gentleness; but the youth would not be comforted. He looked up at him with his face all shaken.

“You don’t know, you don’t know!” he cried. “I was happy, happy as a god in my own paradise, and now I am outcast and miserable—less than nothing.

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Girls came to me and wanted to know why I laughed at them, what I saw in their faces; and I saw such wonderful things. Now nothing—every face is always the same; men and women—like the faces of sheep or cows—nothing in them. Oh! it is a dreadful world—common and ugly and always the same. I hate it, hate it all. . . . You robbed me of paradise, thrust me out into this beastly ugly world; and I had never done you any harm—never, never. . . .”

He wept with such passion that Clayton began to fear that he would make himself ill. After trying in vain to cheer him with some commonplace consolation, he left the room.

Mrs. Jones met him with questioning, anxious eyes: he nodded his head gravely.

“It's worse than I thought, Mrs. Jones. I want to go and think it all over. A man may do great harm with the best intentions; but I think it will be all right in time. He's an astonishing youth; in time he'll get accustomed to the change and find compensations.”

“That's the worst of it, sir,” cried the mother. “At first he set to work and was not unhappy; he worked very hard at his reading and writing. Clarence has a great deal of sense,” she added; “he often surprises me by what he says. But as time

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went on he seemed to find it harder and harder. . . .

"He began to read the Bible, sir. I thought 'twould do him good, and ever since he has talked about being driven out of paradise and a devil with a flaming sword. Sometimes I'm really afraid for his reason. You don't think he'll go mad, do you, sir?"

"No, no!" cried Clayton; "put that fear out of your head; his mind's all right, and if we can get his hope and ambition roused, you'll be proud of him yet. I'm very much interested in him."

She nodded her head feebly, doubtfully.

"Thank you, sir. I had better go to him now. After one of these fits he always has a bad headache. . . ."

Clayton went to the inn puzzled and annoyed. Reflection showed him no new argument, and when he returned to the house after lunch the mother told him that Clarence had gone to bed worn out, and was sleeping, she thought. At any rate, she was sure it would be better not to disturb him. Clayton returned to London, promising he would write.

During the next few days he thought a good deal about the matter, and at length came to a decision and wrote his patient a long letter. Before sending it he went round to Westbury, in whose com-

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mon sense he had a great deal of confidence. He told Westbury what had happened, and asked him what he thought of the youth and his paradise.

Westbury shrugged his shoulders.

"An ungrateful hound. If I were you I'd pay no more attention to him. That's the sort of thanks you get in life when you do good to people. . . . I've had dozens of similar experiences. I never look for gratitude now, and never meet it. Men are ungrateful by nature, and women spiteful to boot. Why should you bother yourself? You did everything for the best."

"Yes, I know," replied Clayton dubiously, "and it was my best. Yet the doubt torments me. The boy's eyes smarted after the operation, and I gave him cocaine to dull the pain. Surely it's my duty to diminish the discomforts of life to him now. I've written him a letter, and I want you to hear what I've said. I must encourage him, you know. . . . I'll not trouble you with the whole screed—just the gist of it. I begin by telling him that his experience is not singular, though it's uncommon. "Every artist, every great man, begins life like an ordinary boy, and so long as he is commonplace he is happy; but when, bit by bit, he grows above other men, he begins to see men and women as Clarence used to see

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them, in all sorts of comic lights and tragic lights as well, and the pageant of life becomes infinitely interesting to him.

“But all his fellows resent his superiority and do their best to pay him out for it; they jeer at him and insult him; they hate him, in fact, and if they get a chance they punish him dreadfully.

“All great men, artists and thinkers alike, are agreed that genius is a long martyrdom, that happiness is only to be found in ordinary conditions and ordinary life.

“Success and praise and pleasure are all got by being commonplace, by being exactly like the ordinary run of mankind, one of the many. . . .

“You see,” Clayton broke off, “I insist on all this to give him ambition and hope, to hearten him; then I go on:

“But if, indeed, your earlier experiences were so delightful that you can do nothing but pine for them and desire them, you may win them all back again. All you have to do is to set yourself to learn and to grow so as to become wiser and gentler and more loving than your fellows, and you will then see the faces of men and women once again in a hundred different facets, and they will all move you to laughter or to tears. . . . But men and women will hate

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you for your superiority and punish you for it; you will be thrust out of the paradise of ordinary life, and be made an outcast and a pariah . . . the Vision Splendid has to be paid for, and the price is heavy."

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Within the Shadow

Within the Shadow

ALICK WILSON was from Leith. He had gone to sea as a lad, and now at twenty-five was chief officer of the passenger steamer *Amazon*, which plied between Hong Kong and Shanghai. He was a handsome fellow, with blue eyes and fair mustache, and more than the brains of the ordinary sailor. Wilson had chosen the Eastern Service because the advancement was quicker, the pay higher, and also a little because the East drew him; China in especial, with its strange customs and incomprehensible spirit, excited his curiosity, attracted him as what is unknown and extraordinary is apt to attract the young and romantic. The pull of China upon him was so overpowering that within a week after seeing Shanghai for the first time, he began to study Chinese seriously. Now, after three years' work, he knew the language, both spoken and written, fairly well, and found the knowledge profitable. But China itself and the Chinese were still a closed book to him; he knew enough to be sure that the

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ordinary English sailor's view of the people was silly to absurdity, but he was still utterly in the dark as to what the Chinese really were, and what they desired; their customary thoughts and their ideals alike hidden from him. This year, however, 1909, was destined to open his eyes to many hitherto undreamed-of things.

In Hong Kong they shipped a Chinese passenger of great importance, the Mandarin Phang, who had been sent on a mission to Tokyo. Phang was an ordinary Chinaman of the south, small of stature and of very quiet, retiring manners. Wilson thought him old, because the fixed, impenetrable, beady black eyes were darned about by innumerable tiny wrinkles, but he might have been only fifty or so, to judge by his walk and appearance. He was evidently a man in authority, for his secretary was always obsequious to servility. The other members of his suite were all women, but neither Wilson nor any other of the *personnel* of the *Amazon* had seen them near at hand. They had come on board at night, having taken the chief apartment, and spent most of their time in their rooms. For an hour or so each day, however, they came up on the main deck to take the air, but on these occasions they kept strictly to themselves and seemed afraid even of

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speaking above their breath to each other, much less to any of the ship's crew or officers.

Still, it became known that one of them was old Phang's wife, and, according to the stewardess and second officer, she was very young—a mere child, not yet sixteen—and very pretty. Wilson heard the talk, but paid little attention to it. He realized by this time how impossible it was to get to know a Chinese lady of good class. Besides, he had his work to do, and it was engrossing, and, if that were not enough, he had made large purchases on his own account in Hong Kong, and was a good deal occupied with plans for securing the largest possible profit.

For the first three days the weather was ideal; a little hot, as it is apt to be toward the end of June, but very pleasant, tempered with cool airs from the north, and the sea was calm as a lake. On the Thursday afternoon, however (they had left Hong Kong on the Monday), the outlook changed; the sun went down in a blaze of color, the lofty bell of sky without a cloud, and yet Captain Malcolm would not leave the bridge, and was evidently uneasy, though one could hardly say why. About nine o'clock the moon climbed above the horizon, a moon like a conflagration—a red wafer—promising fine

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weather, and yet none of the old salts standing about could rid themselves of apprehension.

Suddenly Wilson went into the Captain's deck cabin to consult the barometer; in a trice he was back again and on the bridge beside the captain.

"The barometer is falling, sir," he said, "as if the bottom had dropped out of it."

"We're in for a typhoon," remarked Captain Malcolm quietly; "luckily a screw steamer can't be taken aback like a sailing ship." And he added: "You'd better step below to the Pigtails and warn them of the bad weather, and put everything ship-shape for them. I'd go myself, but their lingo is beyond me."

Without a word, Wilson hurried below and made straight for the Mandarin's stateroom; he didn't even step into his own cabin on the way to tidy it up a bit or put things straight. He knocked at the stateroom door and, after a pause, in which he seemed to feel himself scrutinized, the door slid open and discovered Phang's secretary. Wilson blurted out what he had to say, but before his story was ended he was allowed inside and asked to explain by Phang himself, who was with his wife in the saloon.

Wilson told them what there was to fear, in Chi-

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nese, and offered to go into their bedrooms and secure whatever was loose or breakable, but while he was speaking the shock came, and the ship was thrown almost on her beam ends. As luck would have it, Wilson was to leeward of the pair, and as the ship heeled over and they were flung downward, he had time to stem his foot against the sofa and catch them—one in each arm. Phang went green, but lost nothing of his polite self-possession. As the ship righted herself a little he begged Wilson to help him to his bedroom, as if no one existed save himself. Without a word Wilson placed the girl gently on the sofa behind him; her veil caught in one of the buttons of his coat, and as he drew away their eyes met—a moment only, yet Wilson felt as if he had been taken possession of; never had he had such an impression. As he helped Phang to his room he couldn't help saying to himself: "How extraordinary! What did her eyes say? What does she mean?" And then, with a start of astonishment: "How lovely she is; she might almost be English!"

The vessel had already begun to roll, for she was very light and the sea was beginning to get up. Phang evidently felt the motion, for he turned ashen; he did not complain, however, but lay down

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and asked for a drink of water. As Wilson turned to get it, the girl came into the room and fell on her knees by the side of the bed. "What can I do?" she cried.

"Go to your room, flower of the waters," replied Phang, "and send my secretary to me; this sickness can only be relieved by sleep. . . ."

They must have been caught by the whirling skirt of the storm, for instead of passing through it in a few hours, they had it all night and nearly all the next day, and when the wind went down the waves still continued to run high. A dozen times that night Wilson went below to minister to Phang's comfort, with the unavowed hope of meeting the girl-wife again, and finding out what her enigmatic, arresting look really meant; but she kept to her own room.

Next day Phang was worse, and Wilson had to persuade him to see the doctor. When he returned with the surgeon his heart stopped; for the girl was kneeling by Phang's head. A word from her husband and she kept her place, though she had already risen to go. The surgeon made a careful cursory examination, and promised to send some medicine with directions. While this was going on Wilson, standing behind him, had ample time to study the girl without being seen by the husband.

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Her face was the rather long oval that the Chinese admire and regard as a mark of distinction; the hair and eyebrows were the purple-black of her race; the eyes were long and large; in color the clear brown of the coffee bean, and this, with the dark pupil, gave them, Wilson decided, the peculiar intense expression which had such an effect on him. In figure she was very slight, and evidently still immature. Did she notice his intent scrutiny? he asked himself. She kept looking from Phang to the doctor as if no one else were in the room, and yet, surely, she must have felt Wilson's mute admiration. As the doctor, who had been his screen, moved, Wilson dropped his eyes and turned with him to the door, first casting a careless look round the room, as if the proceedings had rather bored him.

All through Phang's illness, which lasted three or four days, he was in and out of the sick room, for he was the only officer on board who understood Chinese, and the captain and doctor had to use him as interpreter. Perhaps because of the services he rendered Phang, he got to like him, as we usually like those we help. He admired, too, the extraordinary self-control and secretiveness of the old Mandarin. And one day, when the doctor said half a day in the open air would cure him, Wilson sent

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the doctor up to prepare the couch near the coop, and then took the old man in his arms like a child and carried him up and laid him on the sofa. Phang's hard features relaxed into a sort of smile as he said: "The thanks of the weak to the strong!"

After this the pair had several talks, and Wilson confessed his desire to understand Chinese ways and modes of thought. Phang told him that he would feel honored to show him his humble dwelling. As it drew toward evening Phang felt the cold and Wilson volunteered to run down and fetch him a wrap. He opened the stateroom door, turned to the left into Phang's bedroom, and found himself face to face with the girl. Their eyes met, and involuntarily he held out his hands. With a little cry she came to him, and as he took her lips, conscious life passed into intense feeling. A moment later, it seemed, she shrank back listening, with finger on lips, and then turned her back to the young man and busied herself in setting the bed to rights. Wilson asked for a wrap, and murmuring an excuse, as if she had just become aware of his presence, she laid a quilted silk garment on the chair near him. As Wilson took it and moved to the door, the secretary came in smiling. Had he seen or heard any-

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thing? Or had the girl been too quick for him? Wilson couldn't decide, and so hurried on deck.

Without further incident of note, except some long and interesting talks between Wilson and Phang, they reached Shanghai. A few days after they parted, Phang sent his secretary to Wilson to ask him to his house. He found as he expected—a palace, with a mean front to the street, but luxurious within, almost beyond belief, and set in a huge garden with a pagoda at the end furthest from the house. From the beginning Wilson flattered the old man assiduously, which might have given rise to some suspicion had he not at the same time plied him, Scot-like, with innumerable questions about his life and beliefs, and the hidden reason of ancestor-worship, and a score of similar mysteries. Again and again he returned to the house and drank tea with the old Mandarin, and walked in the garden; but never cast eyes, even for a moment, on the girl-wife, and, of course, never asked after her.

Two or three days had elapsed since his last visit, when, one evening, in his English hotel, a letter was brought to him by the waiter; in it was a strip of rice paper with the words in Chinese, "The pagoda one hour after sunset."

His heart fluttered into his throat with excite-

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ment; he never hesitated, never doubted; but gave himself up at once to considering ways and means. Almost instinctively, sailor-like, he had taken the bearings of the house, and within half an hour after getting the note he had found the back street and the dead wall behind which was level with the roof of the pagoda. He passed on his way, staring about and whistling, as if wholly unconcerned, for he had always in mind the picture of her starting back, listening intently with chin out-thrust and startled eyes and uplifted warning finger.

As he dropped off the wall that night and stepped into the deeper shadow of the pagoda, a tiny hand took his, and the next moment she was in his arms. Silently they crept into the pagoda hand in hand like children. . . .

Almost at once he was struck by her utter unlikeness to anyone he had ever known or read about. She seemed to give herself to her instincts as unconsciously as a healthy young animal; for some time he thought she was free even of coquetry. When he praised her beauty, and especially her eyes, she would not have it; she was not well-born, she said; her feet were common and her nails also; Phang, on the other hand, was of really high blood

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and distinguished-looking; though he was so old and cruel.

"I don't know why he wanted me," she said; "he doesn't any more. I think he hates me. . . . I was eager to love him when he married me; now I hate him. He's cold like a snake and one day he'll sting. . . ."

All this was said under her breath. It was only when Wilson insisted that she would speak at all, seeming to dread the slightest sound. In breathless whispers, mouth to ear, she told him that Phang had gone for a week to the Governor of the Province; but when he joyously cried: "Then there's no danger!"

"Hush! Hush!" she breathed. "There's always danger in China. Does Phang know even now of our love? Did he invite you here to make sure? Is there one of his spies on the roof or under the floor? Was I followed gliding through the garden, or you striding carelessly along the street? Who shall say? But danger, my white savage," and she caught him to her heart, "there is always danger in China, always death following close behind you—and me," and she clung to him. "But after all, love, with death at the end, is better than life with that old man. Oh, how fear quickens love!" she cried,

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and kissed him in a frenzy of passion as if love alone could banish the dread. . . .

Every meeting increased their passion, but her vigilance didn't slacken; and bit by bit her fear and desperate courage and sheer force of affection won him to deeper feeling. But, Scot-like, he wanted to argue:

"You talk of danger," he began, "but Phang liked me, I think; at any rate, he always welcomed me. He wouldn't have done that if he had suspected anything?"

"Oh, dear," she wailed, as if in pain. "You don't understand us Chinese. Phang will show you the same face always, even the day you perish by his orders. His vengeance passes to its aim, and makes no sign, like a knife through water. He may wait for years, but he will never forget. Oh, believe me, and take care while it is time!"

"But you?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm doomed," she replied carelessly. "I counted the cost and made up my mind to pay it when your eyes first drew mine in the cabin; there is no chance of escape for me. Don't talk; what does it matter! Already I ought to be gone. . . ."

And a little later, like a wraith, she was gone,

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melting like a shadow into the shadows, and leaving her lover half afraid—of he knew not what. . . .

Every night he took more care; her assurance of danger infecting him, and pity grew strong in him as he began to realize her martyr-passion.

She found strange words to convince him. "Does your fear make you regret?" he asked once; she laughed noiselessly.

"Do you know what I regret?" she whispered. "That I shall never see your white body, never know you exactly, never have a perfect image of you to console me in the long years when my being is melted into the line of my ancestors and lost as vapor in air. . . . Last night I wept all night thinking of it. . . . You will return to your country and some of your own women will strip you, laughing, and kiss your breast and your great limbs, and know every little bit of you, better than they know themselves; but I never shall. I touch you and touch; and I weep because my fingers are blind and have no sight-joy in you."

He took her in his arms and kissed her, all shaken by the intensity of her passion.

One night it rained heavily and Wilson hurried,

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threw himself over the wall, and was first in the pagoda; a minute later she came and, divining his presence, went straight to him in the dark.

"You love me!" she cried. "You are early, but you're wet," she added.

"It's nothing," he said, kissing her, and she gave herself to his embrace with hot lips and mute intensity. "I would ravage you to-night," she whispered, touching him with throbbing silken fingers.

When he came to reflection it struck him that she was braver than heretofore, spoke out loud, was less reticent than usual; he wanted to know the reason.

"Phang comes back a day sooner than he said," she answered, and her voice was grave. "To-morrow is our last night."

"Oh, what bad luck!" he groaned. "Damn him, he might have given us a day more instead of less."

"You don't guess what it means?" she asked, and then: "I'm sure Phang knows and did this to punish us; it is the beginning of his revenge."

"Nonsense, dear," he cried; "it would be silly, childish."

"We are all children," she replied gravely, "and children can be very cruel."

"Is that the reason you are bolder to-night?" he asked.

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"Greedy," she replied simply. "What does it matter now? Perhaps in his rage he will make a quick end."

His heart shrank into a tight knot with pain; but his courage revolted:

"If he touches you," he growled, "I'll kill him like a dog."

"Oh, you child," she exclaimed, sighing. "He will strike so that you will know only what he wishes you to know; but don't let us waste the precious minutes; don't rob me of my joy," and she nestled back in his arms with a sigh. . . .

Next night he came to her and said: "To-day, as I was walking along the street that leads from our church to the water, a huge stone fell from a roof and almost crushed me. What luck it didn't, eh? Or I should not be here to hold you and kiss you."

She fell from him as if she were broken, and in the dusk he could see her eyes white with fear. He lifted her to him and she moaned:

"Oh, I was sure! Oh, take care, take care; I'm sure, sure."

"Sure of what?" he asked.

"Sure," she said, "that Phang knows and will revenge himself. He is learned among the learned,

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and rich besides, and riches can do anything in China. Oh, take care!" and she threw her arms about him and strained him to her breast as if to convince herself by touch that she held him and he was safe.

"Take care or he will have you killed," she whispered. "Killed as if by accident, and no one will ever know the truth, and your spirit will not be able even to hope that your murderer will be punished. . . . Take care of what you eat and what you drink. Take care of your steps on the quayside and your shadow on the wall. Take care when you go to bed and when you get up. Ah! If you should die, I'd hate myself forever. . . ."

"Don't fear for me," he cried, "or for yourself; I have prospered and I can take you with me. I will not leave you to danger. . . ."

"Thank you, thank you," she triumphed. "I love to hear you say it, though it can never be. It joys me to hear you."

"But why can't you come?" he continued, getting more resolved, man-like, as he felt himself more likely to lose her.

"Can you pluck a flower and plant it in the ground and think it'll grow?" she asked. "No, no, you savage man! we have had our week of love, a pearl-

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week, perfect, and I shall go to death thinking you wanted me for always, my white god! You would have taken me with you if you could, and I shall be happy in death thinking of that, and the cold of the grave will not chill me. . . .”

That night they were late, for he couldn't bear to let her go, and she seemed willing to stay, eager to do his pleasure in every way. Later it filled him to the lips with misery to think of how she yielded to his every wish at once without sign of fear.

Again and again they embraced, and she said: “Do not come till you hear from me. If indeed by a miracle we have escaped, it must be months before you visit Phang again, and when it is wise I will send you word; but I feel sure to-night is the end of our joy. Never mind. You have made me so happy that I do not care what comes now.”

And he said: “I go across the sea again, and as soon as the ship returns I will visit Phang.”

At the door she held his face long in her hands, perusing it in the half-light, feature by feature, and of a sudden was gone.

Next morning Wilson went aboard cheerfully enough; he had had a great holiday, he thought; the future seemed bright and his sailor-work pleased him. Hoasen's forebodings were mere girlish ex-

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travagance. For some days he was too busy to give thought to anything outside his duties. Now and then doubts flashed across his mind, but he brushed them aside. Once on the high seas again, his mind swung back of its own account to his experiences in the pagoda, and he was surprised to find that scene after scene stood out clearer in memory and more significant than it had appeared at the time; touches he had forgotten came back—words, looks, kisses. . . . He could discover no reason for it, no explanation. Day by day, too, he became more surely aware that her fears had some foundation; certain of her phrases set him a-shiver, heart-sick with fear. And all the while, hour by hour, his passion for her grew; so delicate of body she was, and so brave, so passionate that she stayed late that last night, though sure of death, to amaze him with her delicate caresses.

Before he reached Hong Kong he knew that his proposal to take her away with him and marry her, which he had thrown out without reflection, just to please her, was the outcome of his deepest nature. The conviction held him; he should have taken her with him that very night and brought her on board the *Amazon*. He was independent, had money—all at once he felt he had made a hideous blunder.

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As soon as he got off duty at Hong Kong he sought out Chinese merchants and put supposititious cases, but could extract nothing from them—a pretty girl, more or less—their long eyes grew narrower in amusement. He frequented the club and found that those who knew China best were inclined to the belief that Hoasen's fears were justified—"A Mandarin of the first rank could do whatever he pleased with an unfaithful wife." The heartache in him grew desperate.

Even Captain Malcolm soon remarked his uneasiness; the younger officers tried to joke him about it, for Wilson was a favorite; but he minded nothing, literally the deck burned him till he got the order to "let go!"

As soon as he reached Shanghai he begged for leave, and went straight to Phang's house. If he had thought of danger it would have stilled his pain to affront it, but as a matter of fact he went in irresistible impulse without thought. The old Mandarin received him cordially; inquired after his health, his fortune, wished him all good things with suave politeness, and Wilson, restless, nervous, dared not put the question that trembled on his lips. He felt like a bull tied to a stake and baited; his blood boiled in him; yet he could do nothing, noth-

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ing; could frame no word that might not do harm, and now he knew that he was being played with; that Hoasen was right, that this old withered creature was enjoying his embarrassment, savoring his own vengeance. If only he had the proof. He looked down at him, and the muscles on his arms and chest grew taut as whipcord—he would strangle him where he stood. Those impenetrable stony eyes (snake's eyes, he thought savagely) met his placidly, and the wrinkled yellow face smiled and Phang continued his courteous phrases while accompanying his visitor to the very door. There he paused and his smile became pensive:

“I have had a great loss since I saw you last,” he remarked casually. “My wife, whom you may remember on the steamer—I was absent a week nearly—she must have caught a chill, for when I returned she became ill” (and his eyelids fluttered reflectively) “and died.”

“Died!” Wilson repeated, choking. “Died!”

The old Chinaman blinked his eyes several times as if in tender regret, and then, cordially: “But you will come again and give the old man the pleasure of your youth, and health, and——”

Wilson was in the street dazed. Dead, his love dead. He tore his collar loose and hurried to the

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hotel and shut himself in his room. Dead! How? The old snake! Why hadn't he trodden on his head! He couldn't believe it. How to make sure? Who could help him?

At some time or other he had heard, as everyone in Shanghai has heard, of Shimonski, the Polish interpreter, who was practically a Chinky himself and knew China as he knew his pocket. The very man! If anyone could solve the riddle, Shimonski could.

Wilson sought him out, and after some hours ran him to earth and got speech of him. He was in such deadly earnest, obsessed by such passion, that Shimonski listened to his story and then, rubbing the short red bristles of his unshaven chin, he remarked coolly:

"I've heard something about this . . . Hoasen, you say her name was . . . I've heard of her. There was something peculiar—I can't remember what. But I'll find out exactly and let you know in a day or two. You don't mind spending a little money? No. All right. You shall hear."

Three days later he came to Wilson.

"I know everything," he began. "There was no trouble about it. Phang's secretary is a scholar; I

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am a scholar; for four pounds he told me everything. . . .

"Your Hoasen was called 'The Flower of the Waters,' probably because she was pretty and very slight—the Chinese prefer fruit that is not quite ripe. . . . Phang found out your intrigue himself when he was ill on board your ship."

"But there was nothing to find out then," interrupted Wilson. "Nothing."

"Yes, there was," Shimonski persisted. "Phang saw you staring at her. There was a mirror in front of his bed in which he could see you, and he saw, too, that Hoasen was conscious of your admiration, that is, had already accepted it in her heart. (The Chinese never deceive themselves about facts; that's their strong point.) He had to go away, but he seized the occasion to have Hoasen watched. Everything said and done in the pagoda was reported to him. Why, once when you swung yourself over the wall, you almost fell upon the secretary; he chuckled over it to me!

"When Phang returned he greeted Hoasen and a little later went to the Chief Judge, a friend of his. But as he wanted the guilty punished in the way of his own Southern Province, he must have

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prepared it all, even before he went away for that week."

"What do you mean?" cried Wilson. "Are these people human?"

"Oh, yes," replied Shimonski, "but they are cruel, too; indeed, they take a sensuous pleasure in refined cruelty.

"Before I tell you the story you must know that Phang has gone into the interior and is now beyond your reach. . . .

"Well, to resume: He returned and told Hoasen that Hoan, the magistrate, wanted to see her, and if she wished he would accompany her to his court. The girl no doubt guessed what that meant. Phang had the state palanquin out; the girl-wife dressed herself in her best, and they went off to the court; but, as she crossed the threshold, Phang turned quietly home.

"Hoasen got out of the palanquin and found herself face to face with Hoan; nobody else in the courtyard but a huge elephant in one corner with his two attendants and a block of stone. Hoan told her that her husband accused her of adultery and had given proofs. Because her ancestors were known to him he had sent his officials away, trusting

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that force would be unnecessary, and being very desirous of sparing her the shame of open accusation.

“Having said this, he held out his hand; she took it and he led her toward the elephant. As they drew near, one of the attendants came toward them carrying the block of stone. Hoan left her and walked out of the courtyard.

“The attendant put the block of stone before Hoasen and begged her to lie down and put her head on it. Without a word, she did as she was told, and as he squatted in front of her his companion came toward them with the elephant. When the great beast was quite close, his attendant began teasing his front leg with a little switch. At first the elephant seemed unwilling to do what was required of him. He shifted his weight from one foot to the other uneasily, but after a tap or two he lifted his right foot and put it down quietly on the girl’s head, which squelched like a ripe mango.”

A Miracle and No Wonder

A Miracle and No Wonder

CHARACTERS

LADY BETTY MORRISON

A pretty woman of about thirty.

ANTOINETTE

Her maid, a French girl of about twenty.

SIR JOHN MORRISON

An Englishman of about fifty, inclined to be stout, healthy looking, well-dressed.

JEANNE

A stout peasant woman of about forty, the Curé's servant.

WILLIAM

A chauffeur.

A pleasant villa on Cimiez looking down on Nice.

Lady Betty. Does this hat suit me, Antoinette?

Antoinette. Oh, perfect, milady; milady is beautiful in it, and the rose, she sets off milady's pallor.

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Lady Betty [*studying herself in the glass*]. It seems to me a little too large.

Antoinette. Oh, no, milady. Milady's height carries it off; it is a picture.

Lady Betty. We are going to lunch in Monte Carlo and shall certainly not be back before dinner. You can have the whole day to yourself, Antoinette, till seven o'clock.

Antoinette. Oh, thank you, milady. I was going to ask milady something. My sister she has a child, a new-born child, and I wanted to go and see her.

Lady Betty. Oh, of course, do you want more than a day?

Antoinette. Oh, no, milady, she lives at Escarene, about four leagues up in the mountains. It is her first child.

Lady Betty. Oh, how interesting! What a lucky woman! How I should like to see it.

Antoinette. Lucky, I don't know. Her husband is only a *garde champêtre*. They are poor. A child—that costs money—and it takes away from the work.

Lady Betty. What matter, what matter! I would give anything for a child, anything in the world! Oh, I must see it. When can I see it?

Antoinette. Milady could drive to Escarene one

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day. But it is only a village lost among the mountains. The road goes up and up all the way following the river, the Paillon.

Lady Betty. But how will you get there and back? You cannot go twelve miles and back in an afternoon. I'll give orders for you to take the small car: John will drive you. You shall visit your sister in state, and tell her from me that I will come and see the baby one day, if she will let me. Is it a boy or a girl?

Antoinette. A boy, milady.

Lady Betty. Oh, lucky woman. What luck! Ah! to have a boy; her first child a boy, what luck!

Antoinette. The poor—they have too much of such luck, milady.

Lady Betty. And the rich too little. Ah! [*Sighs*].

[*She begins putting on her gloves and Antoinette tidies up the things.*]

Antoinette. I thank milady for the automobile. All Escarene will stare at me.

Lady Betty. What age is your sister? I thought you told me once that she was thirty, as old as I am?

Antoinette. Oh, milady, she is older than you, and she looks ten years older. Poverty ages.

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Lady Betty. And she has not been married a year yet?

Antoinette. Oh, no, milady, not quite a year yet.

Lady Betty. What luck, what wonderful luck. Tell her I will come and see her son. [*Sweeps out of the room.*]

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Lady Betty [*dressing for dinner*]. Did you see your sister, Antoinette?

Antoinette. Oh, yes, milady, thanks to milady's kindness, I had three hours at Escarene—I saw my mother, too.

Lady Betty. Is the boy healthy?

Antoinette. Oh, it is a great fat baby.

Lady Betty. And your sister, is she in bed still?

Antoinette. Oh, no, milady, it is a week ago, and she is up and working. She could not stay in bed. Who would do the work?

Lady Betty. And well again?

Antoinette. She looks a little pale, but she is quite well. She will soon get strong again in that air.

Lady Betty. Did you say that one day we shall go up and see the boy? [*Rises.*]

Antoinette. She will be very pleased and proud, milady—I have something to say to milady, if she

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really goes to Escarene. Milady says she wants to have a child. There is a way, I think.

Lady Betty [*pauses*]. A way? What do you mean? Of course I want a child. Sir John wants a boy to inherit all the money and the estate, and I have no child and we have been married five years. What way do you mean?

Antoinette. When I was at Escarene, I had three hours there, so I went to see my mother, also, and I spoke to her of milady, how kind milady was and how milady wants a child. And my mother says all she must do is to go on a pilgrimage to the Monastery of La Madonna, la Bona Dea, the country people call her beyond Sospel.

Lady Betty. What do you mean, Antoinette?

Antoinette. My mother, she tell me all about it, milady. When a woman of the country not have a child, she go to the Monastery away up in the mountain beyond Sospel and there she walk seven times round the Church, praying at all the shrines, and each time she say the Ave Maria, to the Holy Mother, and then she get a child, sure, sure!

Lady Betty. Really. It is all superstition, I'm afraid. But we might go one day.

Antoinette. Surely if milady wishes, we could

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go. And it is true. My mother she know many cases, she say, and all get child after one visit.

Lady Betty [*in a depressed voice*]. But I'm not a Catholic, Antoinette.

Antoinette. Oh, that make no difference, milady; believe or not believe, it make no difference.

Lady Betty. But tell me what one is to do? Nothing but go seven times round the Church and pray once at every shrine and say an Ave Maria before the Madonna?

Antoinette. Yes, milady, and then you must go to the sacristy and confess to one of the monks, who will give you absolution for everything, and then you come out and go home and you are sure of a child. Sure, sure, my mother says. It never fails.

Lady Betty. You say the Monastery is beyond Sospel. Sospel is past Mentone, isn't it?

Antoinette. Yes, milady would have to start early.

Lady Betty. You would have to come with me, Antoinette, I could never go alone. I have a good mind to ask Sir John.

Antoinette. I would not tell Sir John, if I were milady. It is better a woman keep all those things to herself. Tell the men nothing, or they'll know as much as we do in the end.

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Lady Betty [*clasping a bracelet*]. Yes, perhaps you're right. I don't think it's necessary to say anything. We might get away next Thursday. Sir John is going to the pigeon-shooting match. I would not go with him for anything. How men can see poor little birds rise from a trap and shoot them down I cannot imagine. It is horrible. That is why I will not stay in Monte Carlo. I cannot bear even to hear the bang, bang, bang of the guns.

Antoinette. Milady is so kind. When she have a child she will pet it all day long.

Lady Betty [*clasping her hands*]. Oh, do you think I shall, do you really think I shall? It would be too wonderful. I shall be so happy!

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[*Sir John Morrison on the point of leaving the breakfast-room.*]

Sir John. I'll take the little Peugeot, then. It'll run me over to Monte in half an hour, and I'll leave you the big car and William. He will take you anywhere you want to go. I suppose you'll go visiting or something?

Lady Betty [*a little nervously*]. Yes, I'll pay visits, I think.

Sir John. You see, I cannot help going. Hugh Harrison is to shoot. I've known him a long time,

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and he's pretty useful with a gun. I'd like to see him win the Grand Prix.

Lady Betty. If he has only gamekeepers against him, as you say, he's sure to win: isn't he?

Sir John. Most of the Italians are gamekeepers, I believe, and they practice night and day. The English aren't used to this confounded glare. The Italians have won seven times in the last ten years. They are sure to beat us in the long run. You see, we are only amateurs, and they are professionals. That's why we English are getting beaten in everything: We're only amateurs. As long as it was a fight between amateurs we beat the world, but since these Italian chaps have made shooting a business they beat us.

Lady Betty. You're not going to shoot, are you?

Sir John. No, I should have no earthly chance. I was runner-up in the Poule d'Essai, but that was more good luck than anything else.

Lady Betty. I'm sure you're as good a shot as any of them. Bring Harrison to dinner if you can. I should like to hear who wins to-day.

Sir John [*preparing to go out*]. I will. But I'll not be back before six. I could be back to tea if you liked?

Lady Betty. Oh, no, don't trouble, you know

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you don't care for tea. I may have tea out somewhere. I intend to have the whole afternoon to myself. So you need not be back before eight, till dinner-time, in fact. [*Sir John kisses her.*]

Sir John. I'll be back before eight, good-bye.

Lady Betty [*hesitating*]. I wonder if I ought to go. My heart's beating: I am quite excited. I suppose I had better ring for Antoinette, and start almost immediately. There goes the Peugeot and John. I wonder if it is wrong. I'll ring for Antoinette.

[*In a moment Antoinette comes into the room dressed to go out.*]

Oh, you are ready, Antoinette.

Antoinette. Quite ready, milady, and William's ready, too. I told him to be prepared to go a long distance. If monsieur have gone by the lower road to Monte Carlo we ought to go by the Grand Corniche to Mentone, and so avoid Monte Carlo. Shall I bring milady her hat down here?

Lady Betty. Are you sure you know just what I ought to do? Even then I don't believe anything'll come of it. . . .

Antoinette. Oh, yes, something'll come, I feel it. I know all zere is to do. Milady need have no

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fear at all, the monks are very nice men, and I'll go round the Church with milady.

Lady Betty [*given over to her thoughts*]. Hurry, then, Antoinette. Bring me my things, and we'll start.

[*Two hours later, a small country inn in the mountains.*]

Lady Betty. But, Antoinette, this is not a Church or a Monastery; this is an Inn.

Antoinette. The Church, milady, is just round the corner. If milady will get out here and just go into a room for a few minutes, I will go and find out everything, and then I'll come back for milady. [*Lady Betty leaves the auto, and goes to a room as the maid requests. Alone she gets nervous.*]

Lady Betty [*thinking*]. I do hope it's all right. I know Sir John wants a boy more than anything, and so do I. Now I'm here I might as well go through with it. It would be too childish to turn back. It cannot do any harm to pray in a Catholic Church.

Antoinette [*coming in*]. Oh, milady, I have bad news. The monastery has been what you call dis-established; the monks they have all gone away. Un grand malheur! We have our journey for nothing.

Lady Betty. But the Church is there, Antoinette.

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Antoinette. Oh, yes, milady, the Church is there, but the monks have gone and the confess in the sacristy is impossible.

Lady Betty. What does that matter, we can go round the Church and pray at the shrines.

Antoinette. Oh, yes, milady [*staring*], we can do that, but the monks have gone; the miracles have all ceased!

Lady Betty. Now I have come, Antoinette, I think I'll go to the Church and pray.

Antoinette. As milady wishes, but I will go and see to whom milady can confess.

Lady Betty. You must come with me to the Church.

Antoinette. Oh, I will go to the Church with milady, and then I will leave milady and go and see if there is a Curé: milady must confess to some one. [*They go together to the Church. Antoinette takes Lady Betty in and points out to her the three chapels in all of which she must pray, and the High Altar at which she must say an Ave Maria, then she whispers to Lady Betty.*]

I'll be back in half an hour.

[*In half an hour Lady Betty comes out of the Church and meets Antoinette, who has brought the*

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auto to the door of the Church. Lady Betty is a little rapt.]

Antoinette. The Curé, milady, lives a mile away. I thought milady had better go in the automobile, but milady must go alone. My mother she says the lady must go alone to the monks to confess, or else there will be no miracle. So I wait here for milady.

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[Lady Betty gets into the automobile and is whirled away.]

William [at the door of the auto]. This is the Parson's house, my lady [*pointing to the door of a small house in the middle of a garden*].

[Lady Betty gets out and goes up to the door. William drives the car past the house in order to turn round. Lady Betty knocks. Jeanne comes to the door.]

Lady Betty. Is the Curé in?

Jeanne [impressed in spite of herself by Lady Betty's dress and the automobile]. No, Madame. He is not in. He will be in in half an hour.

Lady Betty [taking out her purse and selecting a louis, which she hands to the woman, who stares at her in amazement]. I want to see him; may I come in?

Jeanne. Certainly, if Madame pleases.

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[*They enter the house together.*]

Lady Betty. I would not have come but the monastery is closed, and I have prayed in the Church.

Jeanne [*in the middle of the room*]. Oh, Madame is one of those?

Lady Betty [*smiles affably*]. I have been married some time and have no child, and my maid Antoinette, who is half Italian and half French, told me that if I made a pilgrimage here and prayed round the Church seven times I should get a child, and so I came here—will the miracle take place, do you think?

Jeanne [*disdainfully*]. But, my good lady, those games are all over now. The monastery was shut last summer. The monks were all turned out. There are no more miracles now. There is no one in the monastery, but a couple of sisters from Nice, so you can guess there are no miracles with them.

Lady Betty [*vaguely annoyed by the familiarity of the woman, and only half understanding her patois*]. Of course, I know, being a Protestant, it may be difficult for me. But I have prayed at all the shrines, and before the Madonna, and I went seven times round the Church, and Antoinette said that if I saw the Curé and confessed to him it would be all the same as confessing to one of the monks.

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Jeanne [*loudly*]. What impudence! I should like to see that Antoinette. She must have impudence, that girl; let her come and talk with me—I'll teach her.

Lady Betty. I don't understand you. Why should you get angry? Doesn't the Curé hear confessions, or do you think because I'm not a Catholic I have no right to confess?

Jeanne [*sulkily, yet still impressed by the visitor's calm politeness*]. M. the Curé hears confessions, of course, in the Church, in the usual way. But that is not the same thing as the monks, surely, surely, Madame sees that?

Lady Betty [*shaking her head*]. I don't understand you [*looking at her with large open eyes*]. Not in the very least.

Jeanne [*at length realizes a part of her visitor's innocence and draws nearer to her confidentially*]. *Mais, ma bonne dame*. It is clear, isn't it? The monks were all young, strong men, who had nothing to do but eat and hear confessions. Ah! so long as they were here miracle followed miracle; and no wonder. Ah! I should think so indeed. But the Curé, my man, he's sixty; it isn't the same thing—and you're not one of those——

A Miracle and No Wonder

Lady Betty. But I have prayed at all the shrines, and now I want to confess.

Jeanne [*shrugs her shoulders*]. If the lady wishes to, of course, but there are no miracles now! Since the fathers went away and the sisters came, there are no more miracles. That was to be expected, eh? Sisters can't work such miracles.

Lady Betty [*flushing*]. Oh! I don't think I'll wait, thank you. Good day. [*Passes out abruptly without another word.*]

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A Prostitute

IT had been a great evening. We had spent it in an *avant-scène* at the Opera in Nice, listening to *The Messaline* of the famous English musician whose operas are played in every European capital oftener than in London. The composer had been "called" by the public a dozen times and had been kissed on both cheeks by the somewhat voluminous prima donna to the delight of the audience. Now he was giving supper to three or four of us at the Casino. It was the night of the entrance of King Carnival, and the whole of the Place Masséna was thronged with the gay excited crowd.

The supper was excellent; but the eating and drinking were only incidentals, the background, so to speak, of the picture. The passionate music was still throbbing in our blood; the splendid defiance of the Gladiator's death-song still rang in our ears and the excitement called forth the true qualities of the guests to unwonted expression.

A world-famous Belgian novelist told the astound-

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ingly simple, passionate life-story of Aimee Desclée, the great French actress of his youth. Henri Bauer, whose likeness to the great Dumas makes him famous, related some of his experiences during the Commune, and described the miseries he had undergone as a convict in the French penal settlements on the other side of the world. "*Assez bizarre,*" was the novelist's comment; "it is the convicts and criminals to-day who are steering humanity, and molding the society of the future."

But neither M——'s story, nor Bauer's experiences made such an impression as a very simple episode recounted by a Russian-Pole, a M. Rhimanski. The incident is like a burr in my memory and refuses to be dislodged, and I still ask myself whether it was the narrator and his way of telling the story, or the story itself, which turned for me a mere occurrence into a sort of event.

Rhimanski, I had been told, was a superb 'cellist, and as soon as he began to speak one noticed that his artistry was not limited to music. In manner he was reserved and quiet—almost subdued; in person, unremarkable; just over middle height, loosely made, and slight, with ordinary brown hair, mustaches, and beard, a low forehead, Calmuck nose and gray eyes. The brown mustache did not prevent one seeing that

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the lips were sensitive and finely cut; a deep furrow running down the forehead lent a certain look of age or thought to the face. A man of thirty-five or so, whose attractions were not on the surface. I should never have noticed him were it not for his story, and that was brought in quite naturally; but he told it with the brevity and suggestion of a master.

Bauer's experiences, I remember, had been interrupted by the entrance of a party of *noceurs* who seated themselves at the next table to us—two or three young *rastas* with some gay ladies from Monte Carlo whose pictures were in every shop window. Bauer stopped short, and the conversation naturally turned to the oldest of the professions. Interest in it was shown by the novelist, good-humored toleration by Bauer, when Rhimanski suddenly took up the ball:

“Why don't you write an opera about it?” he questioned de Lara; “nothing has been done yet, nothing, and it is the most enticing, absorbing theme. In his *Maison des Morts* Dostoievsky has a curious page about the dignity of the convicts in Siberia—the ‘unfortunates’ as the inhabitants call them. The contempt of others, he declares, increases the vanity and self-assertion of the outcasts. That side of

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prostitution, too, should be studied. . . . Then there is the whole terrible education to be pictured, the rose dreams and facile high enthusiasms of the girl, all blotted out by the knowledge of the brute, man: the drama of desertion and abuse, the tragedy of the street and the sewer,—the massacre of the innocent. What an opera to write, what a Bible! . . .

“I was in Paris as a student ten or fifteen years ago, very poor, living the usual life. Very much in love with my little friend . . . devoted to her in truth. . . . The other day coming out of the opera—I play at the Opéra Comique—a friend took me to supper at Durands. While we were talking a lady came in, a lady with her *bonne*. She had a cup of chocolate. I felt that I knew her, and yet I was uncertain; I was puzzled by her face; it was distinguished looking; but I could not be sure. As she got up to go I saw that she moved well, carried her head—a little proudly; in a flash I was sure and had gone over to her:

“‘Surely I’m not mistaken, Madam, you are Marie?’

“‘Yes,’ she returned quietly, ‘I knew you at once.’

“I was delighted: ‘When can I see you?’ She seemed cold and not agreeably surprised as I had

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expected. But I persisted; I was overjoyed to see her; she was part of my lost youth. . . . I went out with her and found to my astonishment that she had an automobile at the door.

“‘My chief pleasure,’ she said deprecatingly, ‘I live at Auteuil. Paris deafens me, and I love the Bois, and the environs of Paris, the drives, the trees and the river.’ . . .

“‘You must come to lunch with me,’ I cried, ‘I must have a talk with you. I missed you so dreadfully for years and years, and have thought of you so often.’

“‘You left me,’ she said, ‘because you said your mother was dying.’

“I was astonished by something sarcastic in her tone.

“‘It was true,’ I said. ‘Her illness called me back to Russia; my mother was nearly a year dying. That’s how I lost sight of you. I could not think of even you in her suffering.’

“‘Oh,’ she said, as if half convinced. ‘I thought it an excuse.’

“‘How could you?’ I exclaimed. ‘Does one invent excuses when one is in love?’

“Her face grew cold.

“‘When I returned to France,’ I went on, ‘I

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hunted for you everywhere, but could not find you. I had a little money and was so eager to share it with you.'

" 'You still play the 'cello?' she asked with polite indifference.

" 'Yes, yes,' I cried, 'I'm now the first 'cellist at the opera. But losing you took away the brightness of life for me. My youth seemed to die when I lost you. My mother and my first love went together. It sounds sentimental, but I cannot help it: it is true. . . . How could you have believed that I invented excuses to explain leaving you?'

"She lifted her eyebrows to me slowly. It was an old gesture of hers. Her eyes were very fine, nut-brown and long; she used to lift her eyelids as if they were tired, slowly unveiling the great eyes.

" 'If you knew the lies men tell us,' she said.

" 'You are happy?' I asked. 'You have succeeded?'

" 'Oh, yes,' she replied carelessly, 'I too, was wise in time; one must be reasonable. 'Tis in this world we live, and after we have been used by men, we learn to use them.'

" 'You must not be bitter,' I said. 'Come tomorrow, and we will have a feast. Come.'

"She yielded to my eagerness; said she would pick

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me up on the morrow at the corner of the Boulevard and the *Rue Royale* where I promised to be at twelve o'clock.

“‘I must go now,’ she went on, ‘my *bonne* will be astonished. I never speak to strangers,’ and she glanced at the automobile where the *bonne* was fidgetting—a little impatiently, I thought. What could I do but thank her and take her to the carriage. It slid round the corner and vanished, and I was left staring at the church of the Madeleine opposite, and the trees outlined against the solemn spaces of the sky. . . .

“I had not recognized her at once, and yet she had not altered much. Fancy not knowing Marie, with whom I had had such joyous days and nights. She had grown strangely dignified and quiet. How gay she used to be; interested in everything and interesting. I tried to call it all back again; but the gorgeous life was gone; it belonged to the past, it was all dead like a long disused room where the dust lies thick. . . .

“Next day I was at the appointed place at the exact moment, and almost immediately she drove up in her automobile. She looked more like the old Marie: there was a smile on her face.

“‘You are punctual, I see,’ she said. ‘Won’t you

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have a turn before lunch? It is only just mid-day, and I seldom lunch till half-past twelve.'

"It was last May; the chestnuts were just coming out in the Avenue and in the Bois. We whirled along the white road and past the great arch, which always recalls Napoleon to us Russians, and I learned something of Marie's later history. She was always articulate, what you call expansive, and her frankness used to please me as much as her gaiety, for I was always brooding and melancholy.

"She had met a man of sixty, it appeared, and had lived with him for eight or ten years. He was disillusioned, she said, yet kind at bottom; the sort of man one thinks in youth very common, who is rarer than a perfect black pearl.

" 'He died a year or so ago, and left me enough to keep me in ease, so I take pleasure in going to the theater and opera, and coming back to the house which he bought for me. You see I have a little girl, a younger Marie . . .' and she half-smiled again. . . .

"It all seemed pathetic to me, I don't know why: something transitory in it all and faded like an old portrait done in tapestry. . . .

"When we turned she asked:

" 'Where shall we lunch?'

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“‘You don’t think I have forgotten your taste,’ I cried. ‘Let us go to that big *brasserie* on the Boulevard, where you get the best beer in Paris.’”

“‘Beer?’ she replied, ‘I detest it: I cannot drink it, it makes me ill; I never could stand the stuff.’”

“‘There must be some mistake,’ I replied. ‘You always used to drink beer. You said you liked it better than anything. Don’t you remember? We used always to go to the *brasserie* at the corner. You cannot have forgotten the suppers of *museau de bœuf* and beer—you loved it all.’”

“‘I remember,’ she said, and a half smile stole over her face, and the heavy waxen eyelids drew up, ‘I remember; but if you please, you will give me wine now. I prefer wine.’”

“‘As you like,’ I replied, a little disappointed. ‘Shall we go to Durands? Though I don’t suppose you will get *museau de bœuf* at Durands.’”

“‘I don’t like *museau de bœuf*,’ she pouted.

“‘Really?’ I cried, and I could not get over the wonder, but I followed her lead and at Durands ordered what she wanted—the ordinary conventional lunch, a little sole, the *plat du jour*, and a bottle of sound light claret.

“We talked of a thousand things, recalled a thousand memories: in an hour she had become as gay

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and vivacious as the Marie I had loved so passionately.

“ ‘Tell me,’ I said at last, searching still for the key of the mystery, ‘why you smiled when I recalled your old liking for *museau de bœuf* and beer?’

“ ‘Haven’t you guessed?’ she asked, ‘I never liked either of them. I hate them.’

“Astonishment was still upon me; she laughed again a little.

“ ‘I knew you were not rich in those days, my friend,’ she said, touching my arm lightly with her fan, ‘so I pretended to like *museau de bœuf* and beer, because they were cheap. . . . I cared for you, you see . . .’ she added gravely.

“I was struck dumb. . . .”

Rhimanski stopped speaking. His long fingers played with his wine glass; while his eyes stared into the noisy white square unseeing.

After a pause de Lara said: “Yet many good people would be ashamed to speak to Marie; they would call her a light woman, a prostitute. . . .”

“What wonderful creatures Frenchwomen are!” cried the novelist. “Such relations between men and women in France are often almost perfect; no coarseness in them, nothing like your hideous Picca-

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dilly Circus, your brutal prostitution. Here even viciousness is not gross."

"I don't agree with you," said the Englishman slowly. "That doesn't seem to me the true moral of the story; indeed, properly considered, the true moral seems to me very different. It seems to show not the superiority but the inferiority of Frenchmen."

"What do you mean?" cried the Belgian. "That is the wildest paradox I ever heard."

"Much more than a paradox," said Henri Bauer, "it is ridiculously absurd."

"Come," said de Lara, "won't you explain?"

"I can perhaps explain," said the Englishman, "in terms of art, though I should despair of trying to explain ethically. I think Frenchmen are quicker to see esthetic reasonings."

"I don't care how you do it," said the French novelist, "to attempt to justify such a paradox will be amusing."

"Suppose you went into a house," began the Englishman, "and found all along the walls copies of the finest pictures in the world, good copies, excellent copies, let us say. Let us even go further still and say that there is really taste shown in the picking of the masterpieces. Would you think

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the man a critic of art, a connoisseur of the beautiful? You would almost admit, wouldn't you, that a man who had such copies of masterpieces had no real sense of what art was? For consider, the very thing that the copy has not got is the peculiarity that makes the great picture; the soul of the masterpiece is lacking. All the rest is there. The imitation is superb if you please, but the soul is not there, and it is the soul you love in the masterpiece."

"That is all right," said Bauer, "but I don't see any application; I see no similarity even in the two cases."

"A moment," replied the Englishman. "You say you have copies of love on all hands in France that are almost as good as the real thing. You say that the goodness of the copy proves your high civilization. I say it proves your low appreciation. If you knew what love was, the master-virtue of love, you wouldn't have an imitation at any price; the imitation is always without the soul of the masterpiece, and it is the soul you want, the highest reach of it.

"In England and in America, in Germany and in Russia there is more or less the soul of love, and copies of it are disdained, and even the best of

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them not much appreciated: but in France and in Japan, where you have not got the real thing, where the passion of love itself is almost unknown, the imitation is excellent and you are content with first-rate copies.

"The English have the ideal, and alas! the Piccadilly Circus also; but the Piccadilly Circus properly considered is a proof that we do know what the ideal means."

"A superb argument," said the Belgian novelist, "but still I think it a paradox."

"There is no doubt something in what you say," replied de Lara, "but you must admit that Marie at any rate had some of the essence of true love in her, at least the noble self-sacrifice of it."

"Surely," replied the Englishman. "The essence of true love may be found in illegitimate unions. I am not contending that the master virtue has to be blessed in church."

"I agree with you," cried Rhimanski, "that it is the self-sacrifice that redeems and ennobles love."



“The Kiss”

“The Kiss”

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MRS. JEREMIAH HUDSON (*Phyllis*).

MR. JEREMIAH HUDSON.

LIEUTENANT DICK BRAITHWAITE (*cousin to Mrs. Hudson*).

DR. WILLIAM HUDSON (*his brother*).

The scene opens in a modern London drawing-room. The four persons are standing about talking after dinner: coffee cups on the small table before the hostess: the Lieutenant is smoking a cigarette.

Lieut. Braithwaite. I have been trying to get Phyllis to come to the theater to-morrow night. Jimmy Welch is ripping in the new play. I laughed till I ached over it.

Dr. Hudson. What's it about?

Lieut. Braithwaite. It's from the French: the usual sort of French farce: bridegroom with entanglement: father-in-law with entanglement: the two pairs get all mixed up: really great fun! Shall I get a box and we'll all go?

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Mr. Hudson. Not for me, thanks, but perhaps Phyllis would like it: persuade her.

Lieut. Braithwaite [turning to hostess]. Do come! It is only nonsense, but you will have to laugh; it'll take you out of yourself.

[As he goes on talking to his hostess, Mr. Hudson and Dr. Hudson come down to the front, right.]

Dr. Hudson. You wanted to see me, and I rather wanted a talk with you.

Mr. Hudson. Go ahead with your business. What is it?

Dr. Hudson. I got an anonymous letter the other day. It annoyed me.

Mr. Hudson [shrugging his shoulders]. No sensible person pays any attention to those things.

Dr. Hudson. My dear Jerry, everybody pays attention to them.

Mr. Hudson. I don't.

Dr. Hudson. I think you ought to.

Mr. Hudson. What! Was your anonymous letter about me?

Dr. Hudson. No; but it had a nasty hint about —[and he nods toward Mrs. Hudson and Lieut. Braithwaite].

Mr. Hudson [shrugs his shoulders]. Silly! Some slighted, spiteful ass!

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Dr. Hudson. No, Jerry, they are not so silly. You are away all day at business, and ever since he came home wounded, Braithwaite has been taking Phyllis here, there and everywhere, and she's a very pretty woman, and looks younger even than she is.

Mr. Hudson [*looking at his brother*]. You want to tell me that I am a good deal older than Phyllis, and I'm too tired after all day in the Courts to go out with her every evening. I know all that; but I know Phyllis, too; I love her, and I'm not frightened.

Dr. Hudson. That's just it, Jerry; husbands never are frightened, even when they have good reason to be.

Mr. Hudson. Nonsense, Will. Phyllis tells me what Braithwaite says to her; how he flirts. No; there's no danger signal even. A man doesn't lose the affection of a woman unless he deserves to by neglecting her, and I prize Phyllis now more than I did ten years ago. Make your mind easy, I shall scent danger afar off.

Dr. Hudson. Oh! all right! If you won't be warned, you won't. Willful man— [*He turns away*].

Mr. Hudson [*laying his hand on his arm*]. I want a word with you and my business is much more

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serious [*the brothers look at each other*]. Do I look all right?

Dr. Hudson [*scrutinizing him*]. Yes, why? Is there anything the matter?

Mr. Hudson. Do you remember that little Pom, Rex, my wife had? [*The doctor nods.*] It got old, you know, white about the muzzle, rheumatic and snappy. I persuaded Phyllis that it should be put out of its pain, and took it to the chemist. A drop of prussic acid on its tongue and it was all over. Poor little beast!

Dr. Hudson. Of course, I remember perfectly, but what of that? That's months ago.

Mr. Hudson. I know—four months ago.

Dr. Hudson. Well, what of it?

Mr. Hudson. Some time afterward, it must have been nearly two months, I began to feel funny. I can't describe it; the French word *malaise* comes nearest it—our English "out of sorts!" All vague, don't you know, but very uncomfortable. Luckily it was the summer; I began to ride again, gave myself much more exercise, took my work easier, and for a little while I seemed to get better. Lately I've got worse.

Dr. Hudson. Worse? What do you mean?

Mr. Hudson. I had a dreadful attack yesterday.

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Mouth dry; felt as if I were choking; strangely nervous, bathed in perspiration. Oh! I get quirks.

Dr. Hudson. The dog didn't bite you, did it?

Mr. Hudson [*shakes his head*]. No.

Dr. Hudson. Then it's all right. It's all fancy!

Mr. Hudson. I seem to remember I had a scratch on my finger, but I couldn't be sure. But it isn't fancy, Will. [*Puts his hand across his eyes.*] I'm certain of that. I wish to God it was!

Dr. Hudson. I can take some of your blood and have it analyzed, but I think you will find it's all right.

Mr. Hudson. All wrong. Don't make any mistake, Will. I'm sure or I wouldn't have bothered anyone. You know I am not fanciful. I never felt so ill. I've read all the books about it in the last twenty-four hours, and there's no doubt I had to fight yesterday to keep control of myself; it's dreadful to feel that one can lose hold of oneself and slip, slip into—what an awful torture chamber—God! I'm not afraid of death; but madness scares me.

Dr. Hudson. What do you want me to do?

Mr. Hudson. I must go to the Pasteur Institute in Paris at once without alarming my wife. You must invent some excuse.

Dr. Hudson. Now, on the spur of the moment?

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Mr. Hudson. If possible now, or to-morrow morning by letter. But it oughtn't be delayed. I have had one of those awful throat spasms again this afternoon.

Dr. Hudson. Good God! that's bad! Would it do if I said that I wanted you to proceed in the case of the Comtesse de Gaudier, who owes me ten thousand francs?

Mr. Hudson. That would do, I think. But perhaps you had better write it to me as well; it'll carry greater conviction, and I can say now that you want me to go, and that I don't want to. That'll get my wife accustomed to the idea I may have to go. Send in the letter by hand in the morning. And now, no sign.

Dr. Hudson. Take some bromidia to-night and quiet your nerves.

Mr. Hudson. You unbelieving Christian! [*Aloud, turning toward his wife and the Lieutenant.*] I don't want to leave London now, even for three or four days.

Mrs. Hudson. Why? Does Will want you to go away?

Mr. Hudson. [*Nods reflectingly.*]

Dr. Hudson. Phyllis, I want him to help me to get that money in Paris that's owing to me: I want

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him to come with me, because he'll put me on to the best procedure there, and he'll see the lawyer at the Embassy, and get everything in order.

Mrs. Hudson. Why not, Jerry? A little change will do you good [*moving toward him*].

Dr. Hudson [*turning to Mr. Hudson*]. There you are, you see, Phyllis agrees with me.

Mrs. Hudson [*with conviction*]. Jerry's run down or overtired, or something. He has not been himself for—oh, ever so long—more than three months. He's got thinner, too, and to-day he looks bad.

Dr. Hudson [*with forced laughter*]. You see, Jerry, you're detected. I told him to take some bromidia to-night. He's overworked, and his nerves are shaky. A little trip to Paris, a pleasant change will do him all the good in the world.

Mr. Hudson. There's no pleasure for me without Phyllis, and I don't want to disturb you [*to his wife*].

Mrs. Hudson. I think the trip would do you good, Jerry. You know you love the sea, and I hate that crossing; it's only an hour, but it always makes me ill for a week. [*Appealing to the room.*] I am the worst sailor in the world. I get ill when I see boats rocking about on the sea: a wretched feeling.

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Dr. Hudson [to his brother]. Make up your mind to come to-morrow, Jerry.

Mr. Hudson. No, no. I have business, Will; I can't leave like that.

Phyllis. But, Jerry, you told me the other day that you haven't so much to do now; you can get away easily. Do go if you can. Why not to-morrow?

Lieut. Braithwaite. A trip to Paris will be the very thing for you, old man. A week there will buck you up no end. It's like a night out, don't you know. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Mr. Hudson. Well, we needn't decide at once. There's no hurry.

Dr. Hudson. Oh, yes there is. There is always a hurry to get money, and always a hurry, too, to have things settled. Make up your mind, Jerry.

Mr. Hudson. I'll think it over and see what can be done.

Mrs. Hudson. I think you ought to go, Jerry.

Dr. Hudson. Now, say you'll come.

Mr. Hudson. I'll oblige all right if everyone wants to get rid of me.

Lieut. Braithwaite. Lucky dog. A trip to Paris. Ha! Ha!

[*Curtain*]

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SCENE II

A month later. Lieut. Braithwaite and Dr. Hudson in drawing-room together.

Dr. Hudson. Time they were here.

Lieut. Braithwaite. I don't know why Phyllis insisted on going to Dover to meet him; he could have traveled up all right alone. [*Walking about.*] I believe the whole thing has been nerves. I remember——

[*The door opens and Mr. and Mrs. Hudson come in. The Doctor hurries toward the patient.*]

Dr. Hudson [*after the usual greetings*]. Well, you are looking all right, Jerry, I am glad to see. I have had the best news, too, from the Pasteur people; they assure me you are cured. You feel all right, don't you?

Mr. Hudson [*looking at him*]. I shall never feel all right again, Will. All the confidence has been knocked out of me. I shall never feel sure of anything again in this shifty world!

Lieut. Braithwaite. That's all nerves. I know the feeling, but you'll get over that.

Mr. Hudson [*to his brother*]. I feel as if I were walking on ice that may give way at any moment and let me into the icy current. The funk has had one

The Veils of Isis

good result, I think; it has made me more considerate. I don't judge and condemn others as I used to.

Dr. Hudson. The treatment was not painful in Paris, was it?

Mr. Hudson. Oh, no! but pain is nothing. It is the dreadful doubt of one's own sanity. The realization that reason is not under one's control and at any moment one may be—mad. It's dreadful. [*Pulls himself together.*] Very interesting things one learns at the Institute. You know the infection is conveyed through saliva if there is any abrasion of the skin. It appears we have three skins on our body; only two on our lips. Well, the belief is now that this poison is strong enough to come through the skin of the lips without abrasion. I must have got the dog's saliva on my lip in some way. I suppose without thinking I must have put my hand to my mouth; for they have established the fact that it didn't come through the hand. Awful what the result of a kiss might be! Worse than the kiss of Judas!

Mrs. Hudson [*appealingly*]. Come, Jerry, I won't have you thinking of such things, or talking of them; talking even is bad, it makes you realize them; put them all out of your mind.

Dr. Hudson. She is quite right, you know, Jerry.

“The Kiss”

Forget the experience; don't think of it again; put it resolutely away from you. Live in the present.

Lieut. Braithwaite. It is all nerves, don't you know. I'm sure it is nerves. I remember once in camp near Rawul Pindi the cholera was pretty bad. I got nursing the fellows and reading all about it, and one day I got all the symptoms; had to go to bed, was damn bad. Suddenly news came of a raid—my chance, don't you know. I got up and rushed into my clothes and started out—rode all night. Next morning I was surprised to feel myself as fit as I had ever been in my life. No touch of cholera about me—all cured.

I told Phyllis when she wanted to go to Paris that she could go without being seasick if she only made up her mind. When the ship is going down, don't ye know, it cures sea-sickness at once. All that *malaise* you talk about and dread—all mere nerves.

Mr. Hudson. The doctors say that when you are getting well the danger of infection is greatest. I am probably more dangerous now to others than I was two months ago.

Lieut. Braithwaite [*laughing*]. Oh, dangerous! You are as right as rain, don't ye know, if you'd only make up your mind.

Mr. Hudson. You think so?

The Veils of Isis

Lieut. Braithwaite. I am sure of it. I have told Phyllis so a hundred times.

Mr. Hudson [*steps to him and taking him by the shoulders, thrusts his face quite close to his*]. If you are sure, then kiss me on the lips.

Lieut. Braithwaite [*draws back*]. Oh, I say, don't ye know, there's—there's no reason——

Mrs. Hudson [*coming forward*]. So that's why you didn't kiss me, Jerry. You must kiss me now.

Mr. Hudson [*puts his hand on her head with infinite tenderness*]. No need to test you, dear; none.





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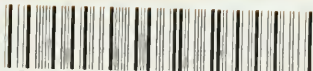
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